

STREET OF T'ONGS
Planning in Vancouver's Chinatown

by

Raymond Edgar Young

B.A. (Hons.) University of British Columbia, 1970

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts
in the School
of
Community and Regional Planning

We accept this thesis as conforming to
the required standard

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Brahm Weisman

.....

Peter Oberlander

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April, 1975

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Department of Community and Regional Planning

The University of British Columbia
2075 Wesbrook Place
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1W5

Date June 11, 1975.

ABSTRACT

Street of T'ongs is not so much a study as it is a digest, descriptive in nature, of the historical, social, and physical facets of Vancouver's Chinatown. It does not have as its purpose the proving or disproving of a selected hypothesis; rather, it attempts for the first time within both physical and social planning spheres of interest to provide a comprehensive guide to the practical planner seeking information and general data on a unique ethno-spatial community in the city.

Numerous sources have been culled for relevant material which has been ordered and put together to develop a composite picture of Vancouver's Chinatown. Knowledge of many of the present problems and trends discussed, grows out of personal experience in living and working in the Chinatown area. While no formal interviews were conducted, hundreds of conversations over two years and numerous meetings with residents and professionals in the area have provided perhaps a more balanced and broader view of local concerns and issues.

This thesis shows that Vancouver's Chinatown has reached a critical stage of change in its internal social structure. Many of the pressures and issues causing in part or just concurrent with this change are of interest and within the jurisdiction of planners at the municipal level. The enclave is opening and being shaped by internal and external forces -- no longer is it as totally self-contained, sheltered, or as resistant to intrusion as has been generally understood. If planners are to responsibly and realistically help shape this

change, their actions must stem from a broad base of community understanding, and community support, as well as technical expertise, that can be applied sensitively, in a manner compatible with community aspirations and civic needs.

B. Wiesman

P. Oberlander

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Duke of Yeh asked about [good] government and the Master said: "Those near are pleased and those far off are attracted" [XII-15]

A. The Subject

"By nature men are pretty much alike; it is learning and practice which set them apart."¹

It was Confucius, 2300 years ago, who hit upon this simple observation. Yet, it is only in recent years, with the advent of serious racial and class conflict in urban areas that planners have begun to come to grips with the magnitude of the practical realities and complexities implicit in the recognition of social and cultural diversity as an important urban value.

Within the urban environment, there exist various sub-value, or distinctly different and equal value systems. Quite often these various value systems express themselves in spatial and physical form on the urban landscape. From the general public's perspective, it is this diversity that gives the city excitement and interest. For the planner, although heterogeneity may be highly valued, it often signals a complexity too intricate for the tools at his disposal, and a challenge beyond the state of the art in his profession.

Planners trade in human values. It would be fair to say that value systems -- social, political, economic and cultural, provide the broad perimeters within which all comprehensive planning activity occurs. Values, both implicit and explicit are an attribute of culture;

¹Confucius, Analects, XVII:2, in De Bary, Chan, and Watson, Sources of Chinese Tradition, New York, Columbia University Press, 1960, p. 23.

thus an important part of any planner's job must be the identification of these values, and an assessment of their implications for the planning process. Of critical importance, particularly in planning with ethnic minorities, is the need for the planner to know his own values, and recognize their effect on his approach to a problem or a general process.

This thesis has as its focus, Vancouver's Chinatown, one of the major, most visible, most critically located, and least understood ethnic enclaves in the city. It is not the main purpose of this study to provide solutions to any of the problems that will be examined; these can only be resolved through cooperative effort between the community and those public officials charged by various levels of government with finding solutions. It is hoped that these pages will help provide an understanding of the problems in a way that will be of use to the planner who wishes quick access to the background and content of problems confronting him in working in the Chinatown area. In doing so, it will undoubtedly be suggestive; indeed, if it is not, it will have failed in its main purposes. Planners, if they are ever to meet the challenge created by diversity, must not only have an understanding of the theory and mechanics of the planning process, but also of the communities in which they are to be applied.

Vancouver's Chinatown is located in an area that is "alive" with planning activity. Strathcona, Chinatown's residential hinterland, has recently undergone partial clearance and urban

renewal. Now, shepherded by strong citizen participation, it is undergoing rehabilitation.² Traffic problems caused by the Georgia Viaduct's alignment on Prior Street, and the continuing problem posed by the need to improve the grade street commuter capacity into the CBD are still the cause of grave concern on the part of residents.³ The commercial and social core of Chinatown itself is on the fringe of one of the most dynamic private regeneration processes in Canada. The speculation resulting from Gastown has already slipped into the very heart of Chinatown.⁴ At the same time, Chinatown is one of Vancouver's major historical areas and the pressure for private development must vie with the constraints imposed by zoning and other legislation designed for historical preservation. Chinatown also borders on Vancouver's Skid Road, an area in which the Vancouver Planning and Social Planning Departments have been expressing serious concern, particularly in attempting to maintain and rehabilitate the area's stock of low rental rooming house accommodation. Gastown, Skid Road, and Chinatown have drastically different socio-economic

²

Strathcona Rehabilitation Project.

³

See p. 74 of this study for further details.

⁴

In 1971, a major Gastown developer bought, through a Chinese agent, the old Freemasons building on the corner of Pender and Carrall. The building falls within the jurisdiction of the Historical Areas Board. The interior has been stripped and the building is once again for sale.

structures, vitally conflicting value and attitudinal reactions to urbanism as well as vastly different effects on the texture and character of the city's life. They exist side by side in a very small area of the city; and yet the borders between them are abrupt. They share the common pressures and problems of the inner city; yet each has its own nature, and each reacts in its own way.

B. The Problem.

The belief that a community is little more than the arrangement of physical structures, long abandoned by social scientists, is now, sometimes painfully, being deserted by modern planners. A community is now seen as a complex network of social interaction, operating within, affecting and being affected by physical form and spatial relationships. Although most of the apparent immediate effects of planning activity are manifest in the alteration of physical form, it has become more fully accepted in recent years that the social ramifications, though less tangible, are nevertheless just as significant.

The specific problem that this thesis intends to discuss is that of the changing nature of Vancouver's Chinatown. It puts forward the hypothesis that: Vancouver's Chinatown has changed its function from a highly developed complex and intensively used ethnic, social, political and economic center, to a regional economic center ethnically oriented, but steadily and gradually declining in social, political, and cultural importance. This change has resulted in

significant alterations in social and economic groupings, land use, and types of development. Chinatown is developing as an integral part of Vancouver rather than as a separate and insulated "foreign community". This new relationship is presenting new problems as the community adjusts to internal changes and finds itself more open to external pressures and challenges.

Cultural values and patterns of social interaction within a community are evolutionary in nature and may and usually do change over time. This change may stem from a number of universal or localized factors. Depending on the variables involved, their pattern of interdependence, and the intensity of their interaction, the change may be either rapid or slow ~~or~~ permanent or temporary.

Change in the physical form of a community is of a different nature. Physical change may be evolutionary, or it may be sporadic. In some cases, it has been total over a short period of time. In North American cities, the most common factors causing physical change are economic and political. It is clear that the rates of social change and physical change within a community can be, and often are different. The result of this phenomena is the development of a lead-lag relationship between the physical and social environments affecting their ability to mutually relate to one another and satisfy reciprocal demands. When the rate of differential change between the two interactive systems increases as either the physical, social, or both environments react to external pressures, the fabric of the community becomes strained. A critical point is reached, when one or

both of the community components becomes independent of the other or more dependent or interactive with external factors. Internal supports become unbalanced, cohesiveness becomes abrasiveness, and the result is usually a planning problem of concern to both physical and social planners. Chinatown is a case in point.

C. The Approach.

Planning, not without good reason is often problem oriented. In simple terms, there are two basic processes inherent in this orientation: understanding the problem; and formulating a solution. The first process, that of understanding the problem, involves descriptive and analytic techniques, while the second process, formulating a solution, involves analytic and creative techniques. This thesis represents an attempt to apply the first process to the commercial and social core of Chinatown. Before planners can hope to provide plans that can be successful in terms of comprehensive goal achievement, it is clear that they must have a knowledge of the historical, social, political, economic and physical variables that have led to the problem becoming apparent. Once equipped with a descriptive and analytical interpretation of the historical development of a problem from its origin to its present manifestations, then trends can be discerned, measured in importance and dependence on one another, related to external pressures, and constraints, and used as the basic input to the second process, that of formulating solutions.

In broad terms, this thesis will be divided into three parts. The first section will provide an historical perspective of the development of Chinatown in Vancouver. It will touch on the nature of the traditional Chinese city in the late Ch'ing period, reasons for Chinese emigration, Chinese immigration in the Vancouver area, and Chinese reactions to western urbanism, apparent in the growth and development of the complex and institutionally developed social organization common to most overseas Chinese populations, but unique in comparison to other ethnic enclaves in North American cities.

The second section of this study will provide a comprehensive social, economic and physical inventory of present day Chinatown. It will discuss a number of social and economic indicators in the Chinatown area in order to provide a comparison with other areas of the city. The relevance of the social and cultural core of Chinatown to the dispersed Chinese population of Vancouver will also be discussed. An attempt will be made to assess and measure present trends so that their results may be extrapolated. A major part of this section will be devoted to problem discussions. Specific trends and problems will be isolated and discussed in detail, with particular concern given to their effect on the provision of social-physical planning in the area.

The final section of this paper will attempt to provide a synthesis of the general principles of change involved in planning for Chinatown and for its new found diversity.

D. The Literature.

Although research and literature on the overseas Chinese communities of Southeast Asia is now becoming much more popular, very few historians or sociologists have been attracted to the same type of research with the Chinese in North America. Canada's record in this respect is especially poor. Scholars have been reluctant to undertake this type of research for a number of reasons. The dearth of readily available written historical material is undoubtedly one of the major reasons. What material does exist is unorganized and scattered. Much of it is in private hands in the form of letters and diaries, while those records that rest in the care of official Chinese organizations are sketchy, lacking in continuity, and secret. Until the Department of Immigration and the Chinese community come to some agreement regarding the status of Chinese immigrants who entered the country illegally, it is unlikely that much historical material will be made available.⁵

Language difficulties are of course an obvious problem. Although written material does exist, a vast amount of information of both an historical nature and of social significance survives only in an oral tradition. Those scholars who are apt to be interested in Chinese research usually speak Mandarin if they speak any Chinese at

⁵ Harry Con, the head of the Shon Yee Society, and one of the top executives of the Chinese Freemasons is a recent appointee to the Federal Government's Immigration Advisory Board. This and recent amnesty attempts may ease the situation.

all. Almost all of the Chinese in Canada are from the province of Kwangtung and speak varying dialects of Cantonese.⁶ Collecting data of a valuable nature from an oral tradition is an exceedingly tedious and time consuming task that is made even more painstaking by the necessity of working through an interpreter.

Although the difficulties of obtaining access to written materials and of dealing with the language barrier are significant, they do not adequately explain the almost total absence of such research in Canada when compared to the United States. This state of affairs is not surprising when viewed in relation to the longstanding historical conflict in American society between the dominant western European ethnic groups and the minority cultures (particularly Blacks). With the movement of large groups of Puerto-Ricans, Mexicans and Blacks into the major American urban centers, and the development of open violence and urban conflict, American researchers have found a fertile field both functional and well funded on which to expend their efforts. In contrast, Canadian minority problems have not dominated our historical development (French-Anglo difficulties are of a totally different nature). For the most part they have remained at a subliminal level, erupting only sporadically to disturb the national consciousness.

A further major reason for the disparity between Canadian and

⁶The most common dialects are Sae Yip, Toisan and Shekki. These dialects are based on different areas of Canton Province and while they are all sub-dialects of Cantonese, they are distinctly different although generally mutually intelligible.

American interests in the overseas Chinese is that China itself has always occupied a larger role in American foreign relations than it has in Canada's sphere of interest. From the middle of the nineteenth century, through the Second World War and up until the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949, social and cultural contacts between the United States and China were numerous and generally friendly. After 1949, America's awareness of China changed radically. Paranoia became more of a spur to the development of interest in China than friendship had ever been.

One final problem is that of specific concern to the researcher interested in Vancouver's Chinatown is the overexposure that area has had of late. For the past three years Chinatown has been under intensive study from a multitude of government agencies, private individuals and the media. This scrutiny has been related to the issues of freeway development, urban renewal and rehabilitation. The result has been a dramatic decline in tolerance on the part of the Chinese population in the area towards researchers. As this trend continues the opportunities for an outside observer to collect meaningful data diminish.

A broad outline of the existing literature that is of concern to this thesis may be divided into five general categories.

1. Primary Sources.

The Asian Studies Collection at U.B.C. has a fairly good collection of local histories from the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.).

These local histories, known as fang-chih⁷ (方志) are in reality both historical records and gazetteers of various regions in China. Nothing on a similar scale has ever been attempted by Western historians.

Although local histories were compiled during the T'ang Dynasty (618-906 A.D.), it was not until the Yuan (1270-1368 A.D.) and Ming (1368-1644 A.D.) Dynasties that concerted efforts on a nation-wide scale were made to collect such information. During the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1912 A.D.) with which we are concerned, the Ta Ching i-t'ung Chih (大清) was completed in 1744 and covered the local history and geography of eighteen provinces, 1600 fu (府),⁸ chou (州),⁹ and hsien (縣)¹⁰ as well as fifty-seven colonies and thirty tributary

⁷ In addition to the efforts of the official government Bureau of History, many districts and towns commissioned local scholars to prepare local histories of the area. By the 17th Century there was a standard form for local histories and they almost always included the following thirty sections:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. maps | 16. selection and examination |
| 2. successive change of boundaries | 17. sacrifices |
| 3. constellations and territory | 18. tombs |
| 4. territory | 19. ancient sites |
| 5. mountains and rivers | 20. emperors |
| 6. customs | 21. famous officials |
| 7. city walls and moats | 22. men of distinction |
| 8. river conservancy | 23. filial and righteous men |
| 9. nobility | 24. virtuous women |
| 10. population | 25. immigrants from other provinces |
| 11. land tax | 26. hermits |
| 12. products | 27. Immortals and Buddhists |
| 13. officials | 28. men of skill |
| 14. official buildings | 29. literature |
| 15. schools | 30. miscellaneous topics |

It is estimated that there are some 10,400 local histories that predate the beginning of the Republican era in 1912.

⁸ An administrative unit usually translated as prefecture. Each fu was composed of several hsien or districts.

⁹ An administrative area made up of several fu.

¹⁰ The smallest administrative unit of the Empire.

countries.

By using the fang-chih for those local areas from which most of the Chinese in Vancouver come,¹¹ it should be possible with the aid of some secondary sources to examine the nature of urban China at the time most Chinese emigrated. To some extent this will illustrate the values and attitudes towards urban life that the Chinese immigrants must have brought with them.

Apart from personal diaries, letters and the records of Chinese organizations in Vancouver (all of which are highly inaccessible), there does exist one other primary source from which some information may be gleaned. From time to time one of the Chinese organizations has published special yearbooks marking any anniversary or other celebration. These yearbooks are useful in so far as they usually provide a history of the organization. Like all primary materials related to Chinatown, these publications are very difficult to find. In most cases only a limited number were produced and these were distributed to private individuals.

2. General Non-Scholarly Sources.

With the exception of David Lee's History of Overseas Chinese in Canada¹² (written in Chinese) books in this category are

¹¹ These hsien (districts) include Chung Shan, En P'ing, K'ai P'ing Hsin Hwei, and Hsing Ning.

¹² David T. H. Lee, A History of Chinese in Canada (李), Vancouver, Chinese Voice, 1967.

American in focus. In approach they are usually historically oriented and provide a broad background to the trials and tribulations of the Chinese population in the United States. Invariably, they are written by Chinese-Americans and their bias is in places quite subjective in nature. Practically speaking, this category of material is of interest but of little real value to this study. Worthy of note in this category are Mountain of Gold¹³ by Betty Sung and Chinatown U.S.A.¹⁴ by Calvin Lee.

3. Major Scholarly Works.

By and large works in this category are focused on the Chinese communities of Southeast Asia.¹⁵ These works, although well removed from the geographical area that is the focus of this study are important for two main reasons. Firstly, the pattern and structure of all overseas Chinese communities are similar at an abstract level of examination,¹⁶ and secondly, the research methodology used in these various studies is of use to other researchers who wish to do related work in different areas.

While there seems to be a dearth of major scholarly works

¹³ Betty Sung, Mountain of Gold, New York, MacMillan & Co., 1967.

¹⁴ Calvin Lee, Chinatown U.S.A., New York, Doubleday & Co., 1965.

¹⁵ See bibliography for details under Amyot, Skinner, Willmot (Donald) and Willmot (William).

¹⁶ For further discussion of this question see p. of this study.

dealing with the Chinese in the United States and Canada, there are a number of unpublished Ph.D. dissertations and M.A. theses which are available.¹⁷ Of specific interest are Nann's Urban Renewal and Relocation of Chinese Community Families¹⁸ and Cho's Residential Patterns of Chinese in Vancouver.¹⁹

4. Periodical Literature.

Most common of this type of material are articles appearing in journals of Sociology and Anthropology. The great majority of these articles are concerned with various aspects of Chinese populations in the United States, although W. Willmott has published several articles specifically concerned with Chinese in British Columbia and Vancouver.²⁰ More recently Lai Chuen-yan at the University of Victoria has published two articles of importance with regard to the Chinese population in that city.²¹

At present there are no major works published in English on the subject of the traditional Chinese city in the Ch'ing Dynasty; however, several geographical journals contain short, diverse articles on various aspects of this topic.

¹⁷ See bibliography for details under Androcki, Bronson, Erickson, Heyer, Lyman, Wai, and Walhouse.

¹⁸ A study done after urban renewal in Strathcona, relating the variables involved and the outcome of residential relocation on the part of displaced residents.

¹⁹ A study of Chinese residential location in Vancouver and of the social, economic and cultural factors related to it.

²⁰ See bibliography for a complete list under Willmott (William).

²¹ See bibliography for a complete list under Lai Chuen-yan.

In general literature in the field of overseas Chinese with reference to North American is limited. What does exist is diverse in approach and subject matter; thus, it is very difficult to find enough material to pursue one topic in depth using only secondary sources.

5. Public Documents and Records.

This category is fairly straightforward in nature and consists of various government reports (Federal, Provincial and Municipal), historical documents found in the municipal archives, and contemporary statistical material and records held by different agencies and departments of the three levels of government. Of special importance have been recent reports prepared by various City of Vancouver Departments on particular issues of concern.

In general, while most of the theoretical foundations of this study evolve from a thorough knowledge of existing literature, a good part of it is based on several years' living and working experience; most of it in Vancouver's Chinatown but also in the overseas Chinese communities, particularly Malaysia. Non-participant observation is perhaps the best definition of many of the insights recorded here. One must be Chinese to be truly a participant. Observation from a fringe position offers many views not readily available by those in the center, or those outside with limited background in the structure overseas Chinese communities.

II. THE BACKGROUND

The Master said: "To be able to acquire new knowledge while reviewing the old qualifies one as an instructor of men" (II. 11.)

A. The Traditional Chinese City.

In recent times (1800 to the present), China has been pictured in the Western mind as a huge unwieldy nation, agriculturally based and inhabited by millions of toiling peasants. This view has not always been dominant in the popular perspective shared by Western observers. Although the seemingly indestructible myth of the unchanging Chinese Empire has no basis in fact, it is true that since the beginning of the industrial revolution and up until 1949, Western nations have been subjected to a more rapidly changing social and physical environment than the rest of mankind. This acceleration in our own social processes and physical development has distorted our view of other cultures and what we assume to be their stability.

Before the industrial revolution in Western Europe, popular attitudes and conceptions of China were much different. To a feudal Europe, China was an urbanized giant.

The city [of Kinsoy (Hangchow)] is beyond dispute the finest and noblest in the world....I repeat that everything appertaining to this city is on so vast a scale...that it is not easy to put into writing, and it seems past belief to one who merely hears it told.²²

Bishop Andrew of Perugia writing from China in 1326 found China undescribable:

²²Henry Yule and Henri Cordier, The Book of Sir Marco Polo, London, Murray, 1921, p. 185.

As to the wealth, splendour, and glory of this great emperor, the vastness of his dominion, the multitudes of people subject to him, the number and greatness of his cities and the constitution of the empire within which no man dares to draw a sword against his neighbour, I will say nothing because it would be a long matter to write and would seem incredible to those who heard it. Even I who am here in the country do hear things averred of it that I can scarcely believe.²³

With regard to the social life in Chinese cities, early European travellers give us the following account. In 851 A.D. an Arabic source documents:

Whether poor or rich, young or adult, all Chinese learn to trace the characters and write... When the cost of living increases, the government issues food from its reserves and sells it at less than market price so effectively that the high cost of living does not last long with them.... If a man is poor, he receives from the Treasury the cost for the remedy [of his illness]....In each town there is a school master for the instruction of the poor and their children; [these school-masters] are supported at the expense of the Treasury... China is more healthy [than India]....One never sees a blindman, a cripple, or an infirm person there, whereas many of them are found in India.²⁴

Bishop Andrew already quoted above makes this interesting point about religion:

²³ Henry Yule and Henri Cordier, Cathay and the Way Thither Vol. III, London, Hakluyt Society, 1916, p. 72.

²⁴ Abhar as-Sin Wa l-Hind, Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde, redigee en 851, Jean Sauvaget, (trans.), Paris, Societe d'Edition, "Les Belles Lettres", 1948, pp. 17, 18, 21, 26, in Derek Bodde, China's Cultural Tradition: What and Whither, New York, Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1947, p. 4.

Tis a fact that in this vast empire, there are people of every nation under heaven, and of every sect and all and sundry are allowed to live freely according to their creed. For they hold this opinion or rather this erroneous view, that everyone can find salvation in his own religion. Howbeit we are at liberty to preach without let or hindrance.²⁵

Even the field of medicare would seem to be not new as this 1585 A.D. account seems to indicate:

But if it [a crippled or sick child] hath no parents, or they be so poore that they cannot contribute nor supply any part thereof; then doth the king maintain them in verie ample manner of his own costes in hospitals, veries sumptuous, that he hathe in everie citie throughout his kingdom for the same effect and purpose: in the same hospitaless are likewise maintayned all such needie and olde men as have spent all their youth in the wars and are not able to maintaine themselves.²⁶

This would seem to be no mean feat as Marco Polo points out in a single province:

For I tell you there is no doubt that in the vast province of Manyi are altogether quite 1200 cities besides castles and towns of which there are a great quantity all fair and rich...²⁷

²⁵ Henry Yule and Henri Cordier, Cathay and the Way Thither Vol. III, p. 74.

²⁶ G. T. Staunton (ed.), The Historie of the Great and Mightie Kingdom of China, London, Hakluyt Society Publications, Old Series Vol. ILV-XV 1853-54, in Donald Lack, China in the Eyes of Europe: The Sixteenth Century, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1965, p. 775.

²⁷ A. Moule and Paul Pelliot, Marco Polo-Description of the World, in "Chinese Cities: Origins and Functions," Annals of the Association of American Geographers. Vol. 42, 1, March, 1952, p. 82.

From the earliest times the development of Chinese civilization can be traced from the growth of towns and cities on the boundaries of the Empire's expansion. Trewartha has put forward the theory that Chinese expansion was cellular. Cities were basically elements of government and administration and each cell consisted of a rural area administered from a walled city.²⁸

Probably in no other country has political influence in city development operated in such pure fashion and at the same time so strongly and so continuously through centuries as in China.²⁹

The importance of a city was not measured in wealth or size but by the rank of the official residing there.³⁰ The lowest level of government, and the most numerous type of city was the Hsien capital. A Hsien was roughly equal to an English county and the Hsien capital served as the administrative and military center for the surrounding rural area. It was usually the largest urban center within the Hsien, and it was here that the wealthier gentry from the locality took up residence. As the major local administrative center,

²⁸ Glen Trewartha, "Chinese Cities: Origins and Functions", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, March, 1952, pp. 70-71.

²⁹ Ibid. pp. 82-83.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 84.

it became the focal point of transport, trade and industry. It was from the Hsien capital that goods, services, government and culture were disseminated to the smaller market towns located in the surrounding countryside. The market towns provided the essential link between the Hsien capital and the rural villages and peasant households.³¹ The Hsien capitals were almost exclusively located in lowland areas, suitable for agriculture, where concentrations of population were usually the highest.³² In form there was no identifiable business district; commercial and residential uses were completely mixed, and more often than not located in the same building.³³

The Chinese Empire was not a federation. It was a highly centralized state throughout most of its history, having a single centralized bureaucracy. This is of course a broad generalization as there were long periods when central authority was minimal or non-existent; however, it is essential to grasp the concept that there was no urban government in China at the local level. The Hsien or county was the lowest level of central government. No special urban administrative structure existed. Hsien government existed for the Hsien as a whole and the urbanized areas within the Hsien received

³¹Doak Barnett, Notes on Local Government in Szechuan, Institute of Current World Affairs, Report 15, p. 38.

³²Sen-dou Chang, "Some Aspects of the Urban Geography of the Chinese Hsien Capital", Annals of the Association of American Geographers, March, 1961, p. 30.

³³Ibid., p. 37.

no special consideration.

The city of Canton, a major urban center, during the Ch'ing Dynasty provides an excellent example of this practice. Canton, was the seat of several levels of government during the latter part of the Ch'ing Dynasty. A Viceroy and staff administered the two provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi; a Governor and staff administered the province of Kwangtung, a Trade Commissioner and staff existed independently of the Viceroy and the Governor, and reported directly to Peking on matters dealing with foreigners; a prefect and staff were responsible for the overall administration of the fourteen Hsien in the Canton area; and two Hsien Officers administered the two different Hsien into which Canton was divided. Canton, the city, did not exist as a separate administrative entity. The two Hsien officers, administered their respective parts of the city as inherent parts of the greater rural counties for which they were responsible.

In the absence of government geared to problems peculiar to urban conglomerations, local power passed by default to a variety of organizations based on clan, village, guild, fraternal or secret structures. A system of unofficial government with varying local responsibilities developed below the official Imperial structure. The Imperial government rarely interfered unless its own prestige or authority was threatened. These voluntary associations provided some of the basic urban services. They sponsored schools, libraries, reading rooms, held unofficial courts providing almost all of the civil

law in the country, as well as providing health, welfare, marriage and funeral assistance to their members. Many had their own halls and meeting places. Guilds provided and enforced their own weights and measures, terms of employment and determined the street location of the activities of their members.

Central government officials were few in number and could never hope to keep up with the various responsibilities and demands of urban life. By providing some recognition for the associations and the unofficial government they provided, the sparse imperial officials were able to maximize their impact on the populace.³⁴

The ordinary Chinese peasant farmer had little or no experience with urban life. At best, he had tales of the big city in his district, had had some experience with the local market town, and was directly concerned with his own village. China is a large country, and in traditional times (as even now) custom and social organization could differ markedly from province to province. In Kwantung Province whence most North American Chinese originate, lineages tended to coincide with villages. It was not uncommon to have whole villages of "Wongs" or "Lis" with no other surname represented. All of the residents in this type of village would be related in some way. It is often at this point that we run into the popular western conception of the Chinese extended family. It should be stressed that families of twenty or thirty living under one roof existed only in the upper class, where there was wealth to support

³⁴ Ezra Vogel, Canton Under Communism: Programs and Politics in a Provincial Capital, 1949-1968. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1969, p. 5.

such a system. The average farm household in Kwangtung Province ranged from 4.9 to 7.6 individuals.^{34a} Lineages such as those in the villages of Kwangtung varied in size from hundreds to thousands of members. They were essentially local political organizations and fell within the pattern of unofficial government mentioned earlier.

Each lineage organization had an ancestral hall, which as the seat of power was the place of decision making involving the head of the lineage and the heads of the sub-lineages. In the daily life of the village, there were always disputes of varying degrees of seriousness - violence, seizure of property, adultery, gambling and quarrels. The lineage developed as an institution of internal control. It also acted as the external representative of its members in negotiations with the government and with other lineages. Such matters as allocating shares of taxes to be paid to the government by individual members, the collection of contributions for the common good, (schools, welfare, hospitals, and funerals), management of common ancestral property, and the distribution of grain during times of famine were all functions of the lineage.^{34b} The government encouraged the development of more efficient and comprehensive lineages as a means of collecting revenue and keeping control with the minimum of officials. In larger villages and towns where several

^{34a} Cheng, "The Myth of Chinese Family Size," American Journal of Sociology, Vol. XLVII, May, 1943, p. 19.

^{34b} Freedman, Lineage Organization in S.E. China, New York, Athlone Press, 1965, p. 67-68.

lineages were involved, voluntary and secret societies transcended clan boundaries. In large cities where numerous Chinese gathered, there would be provincial, district and dialect associations if the numbers of Chinese from different areas were great enough to support them. In the villages, voluntary societies tended to be mutual aid (money lending), parental burial societies, various co-operatives for the manufacture of certain agriculture products, boxing clubs and music clubs. In areas such as Kwangtung, where hydraulic agriculture was common, irrigation societies based on co-operative help flourished.^{34c}

B. The Ethnic Enclave

Ethnic diversity within the urban system is usually the most colourful and the most obvious of the various sub-systems that exist in modern cities. It also usually has the greatest impact on the planner. Ethnic areas tend to be located in low income residential districts of the city. These areas of older and sometimes blighted housing (if not blighted, at least in need of repair) are located on the fringes of the inner city core. They are very prone to fall victim to office, commercial, high-rise, freeway and public housing development. Given the frequency of such situations, the distaste on the part of the urban middle class for these "blighted areas", the relatively closed social structure of such ethnic communities,

^{34c} Ibid., p. 93.

the dependence of residents of ethnic enclaves on their community and its amenities, the resident's relative lack of verbal, literary educational economic, and other social resources to serve as a defense in time of community crisis, the recent recognition on the part of the government for some form of meaningful citizen participation in planning decisions, and the ever-present pressure to use public money when it is available, the result is usually a planning problem of unusual magnitude.

The origin of the ethnic enclave has its roots in immigration. Immigration is as old as nomadic man; no matter what the city or the century, residential patterns have been imprinted to an undefined extent by ethnic background. In the pre-industrial city residential location was a function of occupation and class. It was very common to find the streets segregated by trade (i.e. the Street of the Goldsmiths), and the quarters of the city divided by social status. Yet even in the pre-industrial city there was usually a section of the city favoured by aliens who resided by ethnic group. Today, in the modern industrialized city where residential patterns are a function of many different variables (income, family type, place of work) we still find the ethnic enclave. It is clear that certain very basic variables continue to operate when immigrant groups settle in an urban area.

In Canada those immigrant groups that tend to group together in the modern industrialized environment are those with strong rural or small village backgrounds. Usually, they come from underindustrialized

or non-industrialized societies. In Vancouver, the Italians and Greeks would be examples of immigrants from the first category while the Chinese and East Indians are examples from the second category. It can be readily seen that these groups would find difficulty in adjusting to urban life within their own society. Canadian society provides many more complexities.

Urban research in the 1920's and 30's, when many of the now stable enclaves were beginning to form, postulated the theory that the ethnic community was a gigantic sociological defense mechanism which facilitated the survival and adjustment of the immigrants.³⁵

One characteristic of immigration from rural based societies is its kin and locality specific orientation. A village in most agricultural societies is a tightly knit social unit. When one family emigrates from the village to another place, strong ties are usually maintained for at least one generation. The village, in any situation where emigration has become a desired means to an end, thus has contacts which can facilitate further emigration. These contacts often follow kin and clan lines. Relatives tend to motivate and sponsor other relatives, who, in turn motivate and sponsor more relatives. Willmott has termed this process "chain migration".³⁶ When immigrants are from traditional societies where extended family

³⁵ Judith Kramer, The American Minority Community. New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970, p. 81.

³⁶ W. Willmott, "The Study of Chinese in B.C.," B. C. Studies No. 4 Spring, 1970, p. 42.

ties are maintained over generations, this chain can be never-ending. The result of this has been that the Chinese population of Vancouver is almost totally from five small counties in the southeast corner of Kwangtung Province. Freedman has pointed out that the lineage structure and the local geography of Kwangtung were closely related.

In the provinces of Fukien and Kwangtung, however, the lineage and the village tended markedly to coincide, so that many villages consisted of single lineages.³⁷

This phenomena reinforces the desire of the ethnic group to live together and facilitates contacts and ties with the homeland and in the new community. Established and familiar kin or lineage groupings within the immigrant community allow the new arrival to find an immediate and pre-determined place in the social structure. This place is not created for it already existed; it is only filled. The new arrival already has a system of relationships which pre-govern his activities.

External pressure is also a major force in limiting residential location to a specific area of the city. The external bonds of discrimination and social unacceptability are strong constraints on the activities of the first generation immigrant. While kin oriented interaction, and the locally specific nature of immigration were major factors contributing to the support of internal ethnocentricity in ethnic enclaves, it has been suggested that the two variables of

³⁷ M. Freedman, Lineage Organization in South East China, London, Athlone Press, 1958, p. 1.

internal ethnocentricity and external discrimination were mutually reinforcing.

The harsh social environment of the city has tended to foster a greater need for emotional supports by the family to cushion the blows of the outside world.³⁸

In more recent research, the role played by discrimination has been challenged:

The existence of this ethnic island amidst the teeming life of a modern city is usually attributed to ethnocentrism. Although sinophobic pressure might explain the existence of a segregated residential quarter for people racially visible and culturally distinct, it does not account for the long maintenance of separate autonomous political and legal institutions within the isolated community. Moreover, Chinatowns are found wherever Chinese have migrated and they appear to thrive even in the absence of racial discrimination.³⁹

It would appear that discrimination is at most a likely initiatory factor in the formation of ethnic enclaves. It is only one factor that adds impetus and strength to the enclave in the formative stages but may later disappear without threatening the viability of the enclave process. Trends in large Chinatowns such as New York, San Francisco and now Vancouver suggest that the enclave may be buttressed in the absence of external discrimination by a new

³⁸ James Beshers, Urban Social Structure, New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1962, p. 43.

³⁹ Stanford Lyman, Chinese Social Organization in Nineteenth Century America, Unpub. Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, p. 1.

and younger form of ethnocentrism. This new form manifests itself in the appearance of groups of second generation Chinese usually university students who speak little Chinese but who flout their "Chineseness" in search of identity. A common theme for discussion in such circles concerns "what it means to be Chinese." These groups often reinforce and justify their motivations by harping back to past injustices and discriminations.

Before the establishment of Canada's new immigration policies, immigrants, particularly those from a rural background, were unskilled and unable to cope with the specialized division of labour demanded by a modern industrialized urban society. Kramer has made the point that the immigrants were tolerated for the exploitation of their labour in certain essential but disvalued services.⁴⁰ They were concentrated in these occupations, and the low-paying menial nature of this employment reinforced their social segregation. The following two tables contrast the Chinese immigrant's position.

Table I

Occupations of Adult Male Chinese in B.C. 1885 ⁴¹

Railway construction	3500
Mining	2240
Farming	800
Canning and milling	660
Personal service and labour	1100 (approx.)

⁴⁰Kramer, op. cit., p. 80.

⁴¹Canada Census, 1891.

Table IIOccupations of Employed Chinese in CanadaOver the Age of Ten 1921 ⁴²

Personal service and labour	24,495
Agriculture	3303
Fishing, logging and mining	1522
Transportation, commerce and finance	2898
Professional service	121

It is interesting to note the similarity between these menial functions in an industrialized society and the non-status occupations in the pre-industrialized society. Entry into legitimate occupational groupings in the pre-industrial city was based for the most part on birth; in industrialized society it is based on skill and technological knowledge. In industrialized society with a relatively open class system and an ethic of upward mobility, the non-status occupations have been left to a pool of immigrants.

The economic realities of the non-status occupations has been a paramount factor in limiting immigrant groups to the older, low income districts of the urban environment. These are areas of the city that are increasingly seen as undesirable by the middle and higher income communities of the city. Often because of the vagaries of immigration movements and the limited areas of low rental housing in our cities, many immigrant groups in succession may claim, at different times, the same portion of the city. Strathcona, the

⁴²Canada. Decennial Census, 1921.

Chinatown of Vancouver, has been occupied in succession by Anglo-Saxons, Jews, Slavs, Italians and Chinese.

In general it is clear that ethnic enclaves are not perfect reproductions of the traditional societies from which the immigrants came. Kramer states:

It is not a re-creation of the original community found in the old country, but an adaption to minority status. A way of life evolves out of traditional patterns to meet the problems presented by the surrounding and alien society. Once established, this way of life tends to perpetuate itself.⁴³

The major reason that ethnic enclaves perpetuate themselves is that they remain functional. As long as immigration (given no drastic change in the type of immigrant) continues at a sufficient level to sustain the community's population, the functional nature of the enclave will assert itself, and generate the internal strength necessary to resist external pressures. Even if immigration ceases, the enclave will usually have the ability to survive a full generation. This is a relatively long time in terms of immediate pressures for urban redevelopment.

One researcher, in investigating the functions provided by the ethnic enclave has isolated three main "cultural ills suffered by the immigrant and eased by the enclave. He describes the immigrant as

⁴³Kramer, op. cit., p. 81.

being depaysé (homesick and removed from their familiar environment), declassé (without status and suffering shock from this loss), and déraciné (disoriented because of profound uprooting of values.)⁴⁴

In describing how the ethnic enclave functions to cushion these impacts, he states:

... status in the immigrant community gives him self-respect and stability, here his marginality is eased because it is shared by others in a like situation. The immigrant community's culture gradually changes and provides him with a cultural framework.⁴⁵

Although immigration is the root cause at the beginning of ethnic residential groupings in Canadian cities, it is only one of the sustaining forces behind the continuance of such groupings. Three different situations can be isolated with regard to the present status of ethnic enclaves: firstly, where immigration has ceased so that the enclave itself is changing in nature or slowly disappearing; secondly, where immigration has drastically changed in nature, causing the enclave to radically change or splinter; and thirdly, where the enclave is continuing to receive new immigrants of the same mold to replace those that are dying and being assimilated.

The latter two of these situations are not mutually exclusive; although one circumstance or the other usually predominates.

⁴⁴Stonequist, "The Marginal Man: A Study of Personality and Culture Conflict," Contributions to Urban Sociology, Burgess and Bogue (eds.) Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1964, pp. 334-335.

⁴⁵Loc. cit.

In Vancouver, immigration of Chinese has continued, after an almost three-decade cut-off, however, it has definitely changed in nature, resulting in severe strains on the structure of the established community and on the dominant host society. These changes have disvalued the traditional functions of the enclave and thus challenged the structure that delivered them. The consequences of these changes will be discussed in a later section of this study.

In examining various reasons why ethnic enclaves have remained stable in the face of individual mobility and the immigrant-assimilation syndrome, one British planner has written:

It is, I think, a mistake to conceive the assimilation of immigrants in terms of two cultures: the dominant culture of America, represented by city life and the culture of the rural society from which they came. The city contains sub-cultures as stable and viable as the conventional norms, and it is to one of those sub-cultures that the newcomer is first introduced. The more successfully he becomes integrated in it, the more difficult it becomes to interest him in the values of the dominant culture.⁴⁶

With regard to Canadian cities it should be pointed out that many of them are very young. Vancouver has not yet reached its own centenary. In many instances ethnic enclaves are still solidly based on the first wave of immigrants, and it is yet too soon to accurately forecast what the long term future will be.

⁴⁶Peter Marris, "A Report on Urban Renewal in the U.S.", in The Urban Condition, Leonard Duhl, (ed.), New York, Basic Books, 1963, pp. 121-125.

C. Overseas Chinese Communities.

Wherever Chinese have emigrated in numbers sufficient to be visible, a unique but universal social organization has been established within the host society. The form of this social organization, whether in Singapore, Paris, or San Francisco, is characterized by an extremely complex, interlocked, and segmented social structure. Two universal, and perhaps the most basic building blocks of this social system are the clan and locality associations.

As has been pointed out earlier, each Chinese male immigrant relied on his lineage at home to support his family. He, in turn, supported the lineage and his family from his place of sojourn. While away, the immigrant's place and status within the lineage was maintained. In overseas Chinese communities, Chinese of the same surname formed societies based on a theoretical relationship between one another. These clan or surname societies are broad extensions of the lineage system adapted to foreign circumstances. As there are only about one hundred surnames in China, of which only thirty are really common, the formation of viable societies with sufficient numbers is not difficult where large numbers of Chinese are gathered. In cases where the population of certain surnames is low, two or more surnames often join together to form a joint society. In these instances, a traditional (but often fanciful) precedent for the joining of the clans is found in the history or folklore of China.

Each immigrant also maintained strong ties with his native village or ancestral home. These ties gave rise to the formation of locality associations in overseas Chinese communities. Although the great majority of Chinese in Canada came from the province of Kwangtung, and speak Cantonese, the same is not true of the overseas Chinese communities in South-East Asia. In Southern China, from which almost all overseas China come, there are numerous dialectical differences. These dialects are mutually unintelligible in spoken form, and the formation of locality associations overseas generally corresponded with divisions in the speech communities in China.

On the basis of these two organizational criteria, (clan and locality of origin), it can be clearly seen that the structure of overseas Chinese communities are cross cut into overlapping segments. For example, while the Lis and the Wongs and the Changs might each have their own clan society, the same Lis, Wongs and Changs could be intermixed in locality associations. While these broad principles of overseas Chinese community organization are similar wherever Chinese have emigrated, each community is unique in its special arrangement.

The actual points of segmentation and the exact criteria (for defining associational membership) used vary greatly from one city to another, and even in the same place over time, and depend on the immigration history, the relative numbers from various localities with different surnames, and the existence of special interests held by potential communities.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Lawrence W. Crissman, "The Segmentary Structures of Urban Overseas Chinese Communities", Man, June, 1967, p. 191.

A third major type of Chinese organization contributing to the structure of overseas communities is the fraternal association. For the most part, the fraternal societies had their roots in the secret societies of China. Secret societies were very common in China, and were particularly active and influential during periods of foreign rule. After the Manchu conquest (1644), the secret societies in Fuchow and Kwangtung Provinces were notorious for their opposition towards the new dynasty. One of the most famous of these secret organizations, the Triad Society, was responsible through its varied and numerous sects, sub-sects and splinter groups, for the establishment of several societies in various overseas communities.

In British Columbia, the most prominent society of this type was the Chih-kung T'ang (Chi Gung T'ong). The first chapter of the Chih-kung T'ang was established in Barkerville in 1862. The society quickly spread to other gold mining towns, and by 1903 a complete hierarchical order existed in provincial, regional and local divisions.⁴⁸ Early in the twentieth century, to gain respectability and to reflect the changing nature of the organization, the name was changed to the "Chinese Freemasons".

Another fraternal society, the Kuomintang, has its roots in a twentieth century political movement. The K.M.T. (Nationalist Party) formed by Sun Yat-Sen found many sympathetic supporters among

⁴⁸ Stanford Lyman, W. E. Willmott, and B. Ho, "Rules of a Chinese secret Society in British Columbia:", Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, Vol. XXVII, Part 3, 1964, p. 1.

the overseas Chinese. The Republican Revolution of 1911, resulting in the overthrow of the Manchu Dynasty (Ch'ing) received substantial financial support from the prosperous overseas Chinese communities.

The two major fraternal organizations in Vancouver's Chinatown (Chinese Freemasons and the K.M.T.) have essentially been political in nature. This political interest has been focused on China, and very rarely have Canadian considerations played a major role. The relationships of the two fraternal associations in Chinatown is for the most part governed by enmity stemming from past competitive aspirations in early twentieth century Chinese politics. While the events that have shaped this relationship are long forgotten in China, local issues and the position taken on them by various groups in Chinatown can reflect historical concerns rather than modern Vancouver realities. It is this "temporal feedback" within the dynamics of the Chinese community that adds a complex dimension to Chinatown's varied reactions to present local urban issues.

In some overseas Chinese communities, a fourth type of organization, best described as an umbrella group or peak association, has evolved. In Vancouver this organization is known as the Chinese Benevolent Association. It grew out of a need for the various associations to present a consolidated front when dealing officially or semi-officially with representatives of the outside community. The Chinese Benevolent Association was generally in the forefront in campaigns against discriminatory legislation and restrictive immigration.

policies and regulations. It also served the function of providing a public forum where internal community disputes, involving different clan or locality associations could be aired and compromise reached.

A fifth category of associations prominent in many of the larger Chinatowns is the cultural society. These most often take the form of musical, drama clubs, and in more recent times, Kung-Fu or, boxing clubs. Their membership is open and they perform both obvious and specific functions as well as other less direct functions which will be further discussed in Section III of the study.

The various traditional societies served important functions during the earlier phases of Chinese settlement in the overseas communities. In an immigrant community, that was predominantly male and considered by its members to be temporary, the associations provided the centers of social and cultural activity as well as avenues of contact with home and family. They provided a welcome for new immigrants, hostels for transient workers, acted as employment agencies, lending institutions, internal community courts and executors of estates in case of death.

D. Comparison of the Traditional City and the Overseas Community.

To a casual observer, it would appear at first glance that there could be very little relationship between the organizational structure of overseas Chinese communities and the social structure found in traditional urban China. Chinese immigrants were, for the most part, from rural areas and carried with them only vicarious

experience of urban living. Experiencing the city for the first time, in a foreign land, amongst a society with radically different cultural values and an entirely new social framework, the average Chinese immigrant had to adapt his social structure to meet the demands of this unique position.

In fact, this adaptation on the part of overseas Chinese took on a very similar form to the traditional Chinese urban structure. There are a number of reasons to account for this phenomena.

Traditional China, while supporting a common elite culture (The Great Tradition) based on the spoken and written language of the central bureaucracy, was far from a homogeneous nation. Cantonese, residing in Peking, or Fukinese living in Shanghai were in almost as foreign environment as if they were overseas. Most often they went without their families, and because of the difficulties of inland travel when compared to trans-Pacific steamship travel, they were often more cut off than those Chinese who went across the sea.

In the large cities of traditional China, groups of immigrants from different provinces or areas of the empire began to monopolize certain trades or lines of commerce.⁴⁹ These "foreign" Chinese grouped together in provincial communities based on both similar occupation and place of origin. Merchant, craft guilds and provincial associations were the most common formal organizational expressions of these provincial differences.

⁴⁹ L. Crissman, "The Segmentary Structure of Urban Overseas Chinese Communities, Man, new series 2, June 1967, p. 200.

Another similarity between the social organization of the traditional city and the overseas Chinese community has already been dealt with in a preceeding chapter. Crissman summarizes:

The official government of the cities in which they lived, as well as that of all China was also closed to non-elite urban classes. Government was imposed from above....Considering the size of these populations and the small staffs magistrates had to aid them, there is not doubt that Chinese cities were just as autonomous and self-governing as the rural population or the Chinese living in cities abroad.⁵⁰

From this it can be clearly seen that the traditional situation is quite parallel to the self-governing nature of overseas Chinese enclaves. The historical role of the Chinese Benevolent Association in Vancouver, and its legitimacy as perceived the three levels of Canadian Government to negotiate and represent Chinatown, is an example of the recognition that was given to the semi-autonomous status of the Chinese community.

E. Chinese Immigration to Canada.

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of almost unparalleled social and physical disruption in South-Eastern China. The impact of the western technological powers had abruptly deflated 2500 years of Chinese cultural and political supremacy in

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 202.

Asia. Defeats in the Anglo-Chinese wars of the 1840s fatally damaged the Chinese world view undermining both its internal philosophical and administrative supports. Nowhere in China was the Western influence so apparent as in Kwangtung Province. It was here that the British claimed Hong Kong as the spoils of war, and from Hong Kong ships of all flags travelled the world: with them went the Chinese emigrant.

Although there was a law in China to discourage emigration:

All officers of government, soliders, and private citizens, who clandestinely proceed to sea to trade or who remove to foreign islands for the purpose of inhabiting and cultivating the same shall be punished according to the law against communicating with rebels and enemies and consequently suffer death by being beheaded...⁵¹

a number of push and pull factors combined to cause massive emigration. Chinese in Kwangtung Province had already, a long history of seasonal migration to Formosa and a social structure in their villages that had adapted to this movement.

During the 1840s a combination of floods, famines, and war served to bring about a severe collapse in the agricultural economy of Southeast China. At the same time population continued to spiral upwards rapidly. Throughout China's history, one of the major functions

⁵¹ Sir George T. Staunton (trans.), Fundamental Laws and a Selection from the Supplementary Statutes of the Penal Code of China, (Ta Tsing Leu Lee) in MacNair, "The Relation of China to her Nationals Abroad", The Chinese Social and Political Science Review, Vol. VII, Jan. 1923, pp. 543-544.

of the administration was the control, planning, and maintenance of the waterways and dikes upon which the practise of hydraulic agriculture depends.⁵² Internal strife on any large scale was always accompanied by a decline in waterway maintenance, and was the direct result of flooding and consequent crop failure and famine. The Taiping Rebellion of 1850-64 devastated much of the countryside in Southeast China and left twenty million dead.⁵³ Hundreds of thousands of homeless villagers and peasants flocked to the port cities in search of opportunity.

The discovery of gold in California in 1849, easy access to treaty ports, western encouragement in the recruiting of cheap labour, and the comparatively high wages offered by emigration to America were strong attractions to farmers who had little hope.

In 1860, after the second Anglo-Chinese War, the Chinese Government was forced by the British to publish the following edict:

Chinese choosing to take service in the British Colonies or other parts beyond the sea, are at perfect liberty to enter into engagements with British subjects for that purpose and to ship themselves and their families on board any British vessel at any of the open ports of China...⁵⁴

⁵² Karl Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957.

⁵³ Stanford Lyman, Chinese Social Organization in Nineteenth Century America Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of California, p. 34.

⁵⁴ H. F. MacNair, "The Relation of China to Her Nationals Abroad", The Chinese Social and Political Science Review, Vol. VII, January, 1923, p. 34.

As with so many other aspects of her relationship with Western powers, China chose to officially ignore and deny the existence of large scale emigration. It was certainly not a phenomenon of which the Empire with its Confucian ethic could be proud. Confucius, when asked to describe good government had stated:

Those near are pleased; and those far off
attracted.⁵⁵

Ignoring the overseas Chinese was a grave mistake on the part of the Chinese Imperial Government. When the Manchu Dynasty finally did begin to send consuls and ambassadors abroad, it was generally too late; Sun Yat-sen and the Republican movement had been before them. The legations were received in the overseas Chinese communities as spies of the foreign Manchus. Huge sums of money poured from the overseas "colonies" into the coffers of the Republican cause. After the overthrow of the Ch'ing Dynasty by Sun Yat-sen, kept and unkept political promises, tied to the garnering of this economic support from the overseas communities, played a large role in shaping the internal conflicts and alignments between organizations in the overseas settlements. Vancouver's Chinatown was no exception.⁵⁶

It is estimated that at least 95% of the Chinese in Vancouver are from Kwangtung Province and speak Cantonese, the dialect of that.

⁵⁵ Ch'u Chai and Winberg Chai, The Humanist Way in Ancient China, New York, Bantam Books, 1965, p. 56.

⁵⁶ This is particularly true of the bad relations between the Chinese Nationalist League of Canada and the Chinese Freemasons, both of which supported Sun Yat-sen but only one of which received substantial patronage following Sun's rise to power.

province.⁵⁷ To be more specific, the great majority of the Chinese here are from only five particular counties (hsien) within Kwangtung Province. These five hsien; Chung Shan, En P'ing, K'ai P'ing, Hsin Hwei, and Hsing Ning are in the southernmost part of the province, close to the sea,

Chinese emigration was tied closely to kin and local influences; thus, as Chinese entrepreneurs began to return from America and Canada recruit new immigrants, they chose almost exclusively from their own regions and dialect groups,⁵⁸ effectively barring "strange" Chinese. An additional factor was the location of Hong Kong in Kwangtung Province which made the British and English speaking influence dominant from the major local port of egress. While Chinese emigration to South-East Asia was more diversified with Fukienese, Hakka, Cantonese, Teochiu, Amonese and Hokienese all represented, Canada and the United States became virtually the exclusive preserve of the Cantonese.

Table III

Chinese Population in Canada and British Columbia				
Year	B.C. Pop. of Chinese	% of Total Pop. in B.C.	No. in Canada	B.C. Chinese as % of Can. Chinese
1881	4,350	8.8	4,383	99.3
1891	8,910	9.1	9,129	97.6
1901	14,885	8.3	17,312	86
1911	19,568	5.0	27,831	70.3
1921	23,533	4.5	39,587	59.5
1931	27,139	3.9	46,519	58.3
1941	18,619	2.3	34,627	53.8
1951	15,933	1.4	32,528	49.0
1961	24,227	1.5	58,197	41.6

⁵⁷ Conversation with Jonathon Lau, Community Development Officer, Strathcona.

⁵⁸ Milton Barnett, "Kinship as a Factor Affecting Cantonese Economic Adaption in the United States", Human Organization, XIX, Spring, 1960, pp. 40-46

⁵⁹ Canada Census 1901-1961 from Lai Chuen-Yan, "The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association in Victoria: Its Origins and Functions", B.C. Studies, No. 5, Autumn, 1972, p. 54

Chinese labor was initially absorbed in the mining and railway industries. Onderdonk Construction, engaged by the CPR, contracted to bring in 6,000 Chinese labourers to help build the "national dream".⁶⁰ After the completion of the railway, and the release of a massive Chinese labor force on the west coast, bitter labor problems began to develop that were to shape local relations between the Chinese and Caucasians in B.C. for fifty years. The Chinese, used to hard work, long hours and low wages, presented a significant threat to the fledgling labor union movement. The result was a violent anti-Chinese reaction. Anti-orientalism manifested itself in several forms, one of which was a strong federal lobby by B.C. politicians to restrict and bar Chinese immigration.⁶¹

In 1886, after the report of a Royal Commission on the matter of Chinese immigration, a fifty-dollar head tax was imposed on Chinese immigrants and immigration was restricted to one Chinese to every fifty tons of cargo carried by the incoming ship.⁶² This measure had very little effect. As can be seen by Table III, Chinese in Canada almost doubled between 1891 and 1901. On January 1, 1901, the head tax was increased

⁶⁰ Berton, Pierre, The Last Spike, Toronto, McClelland Stewart Ltd., 1971, p. 199.

⁶¹ On June 10, 1886, the Vancouver Daily Advertiser bitterly commented:

Almost the last act of the Dominion House during the session that just ended was the disallowance of the "Chinese Prohibition Bill" so strenuously supported by the majority of residents of this province who are the only people in the country affected by the presence of the almond-eyed sons of the celestial empire.

⁶² H.F. MacNair, "The Chinese in the British Empire and in the New World", The Chinese Social and Political Science Review, Vol. VII, No. 3, July, 1922, p. 17.

to \$100, and in 1904 to \$500. An examination of Table II shows that the \$500 head tax had an immediate and noticeable effect; however, its impact was significant for only two or three years.

Table IV

Chinese Paying Head Tax (\$500.00) ⁶³	
1905 - by June 30 -	8
1906	22
1907	91
1908	1,482
1909	1,411
1910	1,614
1911	4,515
1912	6,083
1913	7,078
1914	5,274
1915	1,155
1916	20
1917	?
1918	650
1919	4,066
1920	363

W.C. McKenzie King analysed the situation and reported:

The Chinese at home looked on the new tax as constituting an all but impossible barrier. Then the economic effect of the tax became apparent. The Chinaman who landed in this country prior to January, 1904, discovered that the State, unwittingly, perhaps, had by restricting further competition from without created for his labour a huge monopoly; without organization, without expense, without even agitation, every Chinaman became a unit in a labour group more favoured than the most exclusive and highly protected trade union. Then monopoly began to do its work. The Chinaman discovering his protected position, sought the advance in wages which comes from an increasing demand and diminishing supply. Within

⁶³Ibid. p. 18.

a couple of years wages doubled, and in some instances, more particularly in the case of servants of a better class, trebled and even went beyond this point.⁶⁴

Further discriminatory legislation was passed when it became clear that the need tax was not effective. In 1911, an Act of Parliament stipulated that immigration of merchants was to be restricted until proof of their position and good faith was provided.⁶⁵ This was a necessary move as those Orientals exempt from the poll tax included consular officials, their families and suites, merchants and their families, and members of the learned professions, including students and clergy.⁶⁶ Between 1886 and 1920, 6,012 persons were exempted and almost all of these fell into the merchant category.⁶⁷ In 1913 an Order in Council prohibited the landing of skilled or unskilled laborers at British Columbia ocean ports. This regulation was at first generally ignored; however, by mid-1914, it began to be stringently enforced against Chinese and was renewed every six months to remain in effect.⁶⁸ The drop in immigration after 1914 reflects constraints in shipping due to the war and it can be seen that immigration immediately resumed at high levels in 1918. Between the years 1886-1920, the numbers of Chinese paying the head tax was 78,748 and revenues generated through immigration activity

⁶⁴Canada. Royal Commission Appointed to Investigate the Method by which Oriental Laborers Have Been Introduced into Canada. W.C. MacKenzie King, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1908.

⁶⁵MacNair, The Chinese in the British Empire, p. 19.

⁶⁶Ibid. p. 20.

⁶⁷Loc. cit.

⁶⁸Ibid. p. 19

including head tax, fines, and registration permits was 20.5 million dollars.⁶⁹

One of the most significant facets of Chinese immigration was that on the whole the individual Chinese immigrant did not come to stay. He came to make money to send back to his family in China and money to buy land in his home village. The term sojourner has been used to describe this phenomenon.

... Sojourner is ... a deviant type of the sociological term of the stranger, one who clings to the cultural heritage of his own ethnic group and tends to live in isolation, hindering his assimilation in the society in which he resides, often for many years. The sojourn is conceived as a "job" which is to be finished in the shortest time possible. As an alternative to that end he travels back to his homeland every few years.⁷⁰

A less academic interpretation of the "sojourn" was offered by a Vancouver newspaper in 1886.

For where as the Indian or the negro is identified in every possible way with our soil, and has no other ties or interests, the Chinaman comes here, an alien, lives a foreign life while among us, and as soon as he has accumulated wealth sufficient for his needs, glides away an alien still.⁷¹

To the Chinese immigrant, the cultural experience that held landownership to be the only real wealth was a predominant factor in

⁶⁹Canada Year Book, 1920, p. 124.

⁷⁰C.P. Siu, "The Sojourners", American Journal of Sociology, 1952, pp. 34-35.

⁷¹Vancouver Daily Advertiser, June 10, 1886.

his choice of economic activity overseas. He did not, as a rule, invest in land in Canada as business or a wage provided a more easily liquidated resource which could be used to buy land in China. W.F. Willmot makes the point directly:

He (the Chinese Immigrant) left in order to remit whatever savings he could afford to aid his family in China. In effect, he left to sojourn elsewhere, with the clear intention of returning to his home, of supporting it in the meantime and of eventually being buried in his village. This is, of course, in keeping with the traditional Chinese view that land is the only real wealth and that commerce is merely a means to wealth. Thus, a commercial enterprise is built in order to accumulate liquid capital with the aim of buying land.⁷²

Just the opposite is true today, and increasing land ownership among the Chinese community in the 1940's, 1950's and 60's is just as an effective indicator of changing attitudes and commitment as is the record of Chinese naturalizations following 1949.

Because of the "sojourn" nature of Chinese immigration, over 95% of the immigrants were male. They returned to China from time to time to have families and maintain contact with their homeland and properties. Lyman has commented on the origins of American Chinese communities by pointing out one of their unique features.

It is hardly possible to speak of a conjugal family life for most Chinese men in the United States until after the third decade of the twentieth century.

⁷²W.E. Willmott, "Approaches to the Study of the Chinese in British Columbia", B.C. Studies, No. 4, Spring 1970, p. 42.

The long womanless condition of the Chinese in America is one of the most profound and least discussed factors affecting Chinese communities and acculturation.⁷³

Table V

Adult Chinese Immigration into Canada by Sex⁷⁴

	<u>1906 - 1940</u>	
	Male	Female
1906 - 1910	9,266	213
1911 - 1915	20,187	323
1916 - 1925	6,377	291
1926 - 1940	6	2

Between 1886 and 1920, over 80,000 registration for leave permits were issued at one dollar apiece to allow the Chinese holder to be out of the country for twelve months, and to re-enter without having to pay the head tax.⁷⁵

Table VI

Chinese Immigration and Registration for Leave⁷⁶

	<u>1886 - 1940</u>	
	Immigrants	Permits for Leave
1886 - 1900	29,031	15,853
1901 - 1910	23,495	25,453
1911 - 1920	32,244	38,899
1921 - 1930	5,572	58,857
1931 - 1940	4	24,794

⁷³Stanford Lyman, "Marriage and the Family among the Chinese Immigrants", Phylon Quarterly, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, (Winter), 1968, pp. 323-330.

⁷⁴Canada Yearbook 1945.

⁷⁵Canada Yearbook 1920, p. 124.

⁷⁶Canada Yearbook 1941.

Although these are no accurate figures of the number of Chinese who returned to China to stay, Lyman estimates that in the United States between 1820 - 1892 over 75% returned to live permanently in China.⁷⁷ The Chinese immigrants' lack of commitment to Canada can be clearly seen in their low naturalization rate.

Table VII

Naturalization of Chinese in Canada⁷⁸

1907 - 1940

1907 - 1910	957
1911 - 1920	745
1921 - 1930	309
1931 - 1940	70

Between 1907 - 1940, although the Chinese population of Canada was over 34,000 only 2,001 Chinese were naturalized in that thirty-three year period. The Japanese population, who on the whole immigrated later and in fewer numbers had 5,015 of their number naturalized over the same time span.⁷⁹

In 1926 the federal government, finally surrendering to B.C.'s fondest wish passed the Oriental Exclusion Act, and until 1947, when the legislation was repealed, all significant Chinese and Japanese immigration halted. The oriental population continued to grow but natural increase

⁷⁷ Stanford Lyman, Chinese Social Organization in Nineteenth Century America, p. 24.

⁷⁸ Canada Yearbooks 1916-1917, 1922-23, 1932, 1942.

⁷⁹ Hayne Wai, The Chinese and Their Voluntary Associations in British Columbia: A Political Machine Interpretation. unpub. M.A. Thesis, Queens University, 1970, p. 23.

played the largest part. Once again differences in Chinese and Japanese communities became apparent as the Chinese community, predominantly male, was forced in on itself, the Japanese community began to be assimilated with the percentage of Canadian born becoming a significant factor.

Table VIII

Proportion of Canadian Born Chinese and Japanese⁸⁰
to Foreign Born 1921 - 1961

	Chinese Pop.	% Canadian Born	Japanese Pop.	% Canadian Born
1921	39,587	7.5	15,868	27.3
1931	46,519	11.6	23,342	48.
1941	34,627	19.8	23,149	61.
1951	32,528	30.6	21,663	72.7
1961	58,197	39.5	29,157	78.2

During the late 1930's and 1940's there was a significant shift in Canadian attitudes towards the Chinese community. The focus of oriental discrimination began to center upon the Japanese. In part this was due to the upward swing in the economic and labor markets following the depression and in part to be a growing uneasiness and distrust of Japan's Imperial ambitions. The beginning of war and our alliance with China formalized this change of attitude and began a new era in the Chinese community's relationship with its host environment.

Postwar easing of immigration laws have resulted, except during the 1957-61 period of Progressive Conservative Government, in a steady flow of Chinese immigration.

⁸⁰Canada Vital Statistics, 1961.

Table IX

Chinese Immigration Into Canada and B.C. 1941-1973⁸¹

	Canada	B.C. as Destination
1941 - 46	8	-
1947 - 51	5,362	-
1952 - 56	10,909	-
1957 - 61	9,069	2,851
1962 - 66	12,977	4,089
1967 - 68	14,791	5,483
1968 - 69	8,382	2,413
1969 - 70	8,272	2,617
1970 - 71	5,377	1,588
1971 - 72	5,817	2,679
1972 - 73	7,181	2,215

F. Vancouver and the Chinese: Five Vignettes.1. Pride of the Province.

On July 27, 1886, a short article appearing in Vancouver Daily Advertiser marks the first official notice of substantial Chinese influx into Vancouver.

A number of Chinamen are coming into the city taking up their locations principally in the outskirts... There is a colony of the mongolians on a tract of land consisting of 160 acres of the Westminster Road (Main St.) This tract has been leased to them free for ten years on the condition that they cleared and cultivated it.⁸²

Many of the first Chinese to come to Vancouver did so not from the sea,

⁸¹Canada. Department of Immigration and Citizenship Statistics, 1941-61 and Department of Manpower and Immigration, Immigration Statistics, 1962-73.

⁸²Vancouver Daily Advertiser, July 27, 1886.

but from New Westminster, where there was already in 1886 a substantial population of Chinese. Those that did come by sea to Vancouver like as not came from Victoria rather than directly from China. Previous to July of 1886, there had been a few Chinese in the city; however, they had left after the famous fire of June 13, which left only twelve of the 600 buildings of that time standing. Before the incorporation of Vancouver, local citizens had attempted to keep the Chinese out. In referring to these past efforts, one prominent real estate agent wrote in December of 1886:

... you are awakening to the fact that the compact minority of the celestials in this city is likely to become as it is in Victoria -- a majority... Had you been acquainted with the efforts and steps taken when this city was known as Granville to prevent the locating of Chinese, you would not ask what has ever been done from a civic standpoint.⁸³

By 1886 the CPR was completed and excess labor, both white and Chinese, was drifting into the new city of Vancouver in large numbers. The Chinese continued to prove extremely industrious and flexible; besides supplying cheap hard and domestic labour, they quickly provided a function with which they were well acquainted.

... Their market wagon can be seen daily bringing vegetables of all descriptions to this city for sale. They supply private residences, hotels, and boarding houses who depend almost entirely on the Chinamen for their vegetable products.⁸⁴

⁸³Vancouver Daily Advertiser, Dec. 27, 1886. Letter to the Editor under headline; Pitt on Pigtails. This letter, written by R.D. Pitt was in reply to an article which appeared in the paper December 24, of which no copy is available.

⁸⁴The Vancouver News. July 27, 1886.

The Chinese grouped around the southeast banks of False Creek, where a shanty town was built out of refuse from the mills. The wooden shacks later were described as fringing both sides of the Creek as far west as present day Carrall Street.⁸⁵ On election day, 1886, a mob burned out the Chinese shanty town and those Chinese who did not flee, moved in and around the present day Shanghai, Canton and Market Alleys.

After the great fire of June 13, 1886, the Chinese began to return to the City in small groups; however, the Knights of Labor organized to bar them. A committee of leading lawyers and real estate men was set up to lobby property owners to renounce leases to Chinese. This committee was successful in all but one case.⁸⁶ A meeting was called, presided over by Mayor McLean who, with other members of the City Council pledged "to guard against this evil". Mr. L.A. Hamilton, Alderman, representing the CPR, pledged himself also on behalf of the railway.⁸⁷

The last meeting of public spirited citizens in Vancouver before the new year (1887) gave all Chinese one week to leave the city. On January 6, 1887, the Vancouver Advertiser reported that whites continue to bring Chinese into their homes as domestic servants, and something must be done before they "gobble up" the whole country. "First Contingent

⁸⁵Q. Yip, Vancouver Chinatown, Vancouver, Pacific Press Ltd., 1936.

⁸⁶The Vancouver Advertiser, December 27, 1886.

⁸⁷Loc. Cit.

of a New Chinese Horde Invades the City and Threatens the Peace, Goodwill and Prospects of the Community" appeared as the headline in the Advertiser on January 7. The report details a local contractor's plan to employ 500 Chinese labourers to clear the Brighthouse Estates.⁸⁸

We contend that 350 white men would have done the work of these 500 Chinese if they were paid good wages...⁸⁹

John McDougall was the contractor in question and he had contracted to slash the timber at \$36.00 an acre. One third of the land in question was owned by the CPR, while Premier Robson of British Columbia owned 1/6 of an interest and the Oppenheimer brothers owned 1/12.⁹⁰ After slashing, McDougall contracted to clear the land for \$325.00 per acre but the owners protested that this was too much and he was told he could do it with Chinese labor for \$160.00 an acre. McDougall agreed and went ahead. As soon as the Chinese arrived heavy snow storms in the interior resulted in the CPR laying off 1,000 men and the finishing of the Northern Pacific Tunnel near Tacoma freed 2,000 more. Many of these unemployed white labourers came to Vancouver in search of work.⁹¹

Between January 9 and 10 the tension in Vancouver increased and reached a climax on the next day with a forced mass expulsion of

⁸⁸ The Brighthouse Estates consisted of the 440 acres west of Burrard St. down to English Bay between False Creek and Coal Harbour.

⁸⁹ Vanocuver Daily Advertiser, January 6, 1887.

⁹⁰ The Province, March 13, 1926. Magazine Section, "Interview with John McDougall, p. 1.

⁹¹ Loc Cit.

of Chinese from the city. Chinese, from all over Vancouver were rounded up by a mob and herded to the wharf where they were forced on a ship to Victoria. A band of 700 attacked McDougall's work camp and drove the labourers to the wharf while the Mayor and Chief of Police looked on.⁹²

On January 15, the Victoria Times completely out of sympathy with the citizens of Vancouver commented:

That the offense committed is a serious one is the universal opinion, and for which the perpetrators will suffer the full penalty of the law be they whom they may. The fair fame of the province demands that a thorough and searching investigation be held and the guilty ones brought to justice. If the rumor is correct, the Mayor, the police magistrate, and the stipendiary magistrate were participants in the act of expelling the Chinese...⁹⁵

In describing the incident the Victoria report went on to state:

Some Chinese for years have had a vegetable ranch on False Creek and here their small houses were pulled down. They (the mob) entered Ald. L. A. Hamilton's house while the family were at dinner, took the two Chinese boys who were servants there and bundled them off to the steamer.⁹⁴

On February 6, 1887 a terse account in the Vancouver press reflects continuing attitudes:

Twenty Chinese on foot from New Westminster were turned back by vigilant citizens...⁹⁵

⁹²The Province, March 13, 1926. Magazine Section, "Interview with John McDougall", p.1.

⁹³The Victoria Times, January 15, 1887.

⁹⁴Loc. Cit.

⁹⁵The Vancouver News, February 6, 1887.

Despite an active campaign against them, Chinese continued to come in and settle in Vancouver. Far from being ashamed of what might have been explained as misbegotten mob psychology, local obstruction against the Chinese took new turns. On February 16, ex-Alderman J.R. Northcott, the Chairman of the Anti-Chinese Pledge Group stated that:

... there were fully 100 more Chinamen in town than there were three weeks ago and someone must be employing them as they were seen on the streets every day carrying bundles of clothes.⁹⁶

The Anti-Chinese Pledge Group was formed for the purpose of organizing businessmen in all lines to boycott Chinese customers. Each of the members placed a card in the window of their establishment which read: "The undersigned pledges himself not to deal directly or indirectly with Chinese".⁹⁷

On February 25, attitude of Vancouver's founding citizens led to the outbreak of further violence; a mob attacked a Chinese encampment at Coal Harbor and burned their homes. The next day the Chinese were pushed out of False Creek, their shanties smashed and 86 persons were forced to leave for New Westminster.⁹⁸

The situation continued to worsen until the Provincial Government, spurred by the blatancy of Vancouver's discriminatory policies, passed special legislation to put special constables in charge of law and

⁹⁶ The Vancouver News, February 16, 1886.

⁹⁷ Loc. Cit.

⁹⁸ Vancouver News, February 25 and 26th, 1887.

and order in the city. In reply to the Vancouver City Council's protest Provincial Secretary John Robson wrote:

... I have to also point out to the City Council that the Government have been aware that a system of intimidation not only against Chinese but also to those not altogether unfavorable to their presence, has been more or less in force in the city of Vancouver for some time back ... and has apparently met with no discountenance at the hands of the local authorities...⁹⁹

Vancouver, on the other hand, continued to flaunt an attitude of pride in her action, refusing to believe others in B.C. could really be against them.

The City of Vancouver has apparently the whole provincial press against her in this effort to suppress the Chinese evil in the first stages of her existence without one generous offer of assistance, but we will set an example of patient persistency and shame the sister communities who have so plainly displayed their jealousy and meanness.¹⁰⁰

The Provincial Chief of Police, Mr. Roycraft, with forty special constables occupied Vancouver after the Provincial Government passed an Order in Council placing the city under Marshall Law. Roycraft and his special constables billeted in the city hall for six weeks. The city was only released from Marshall Law after the citizens of Vancouver gave guarantees of their intention to govern themselves properly.

⁹⁹ Vancouver News, February 26, 1887.

¹⁰⁰ Loc. Cit.

2. The First Decade: Expansion and Violence.

On June 18, 1902, a whole line of "chinks", in the words of the City Health Inspector, Robert Marrion, were brought up before the city magistrate for defying municipal by-laws. Two issues loomed large, as offenses peculiar to the Chinese of this period; they ran rooming houses or what they termed their "society hostels" without the benefit of a city license; and when doing laundry, contrary to the health code they sprayed water from their mouths onto the ironing rather than using a proper atomizer.

Chinatown was beginning to expand out of its original location beside False Creek on Shanghai and Canton Alleys. In September of 1902, worried businessmen on Hastings Street were expressing public concern over the drift of Chinatown to East of Carrall Street. They feared as the Chinese continued to buy lots on the South side of Hastings Street they would become enclosed and surrounded. They complained of the City Health Inspector, who, through rigidly enforcing his regulations, and continually condemning the fire and sanitary arrangements in Chinatown, was providing the impetus for their slow spread to the east.

The opening of the Chinese Empire Reform Association on Carrall Street in October of 1903 testifies to the eastward drift in expansion of the enclave. It is also interesting to note that Vancouver's Chinatown was gaining recognition as dominant community among the Chinese in the Province. Leaders of the Chinese communities in Victoria and New Westminster attended the opening of the new building.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹The Province, October 17, 1903.

In 1904, the cradle of Chinatown, west of Carrall Street on the south side of Dupont (Pender) was demolished to make way the V W and Y Railway improvements.¹⁰² Chinatown expansion continued to be newsworthy and land purchases involving Chinese were often reported in the press. On May 10 and May 12 of 1904, the foundation of the Chinese tenement district (now the site of Marshall Wells Warehouse) was laid. A Chinese syndicate headed by Wing Sang bought eleven lots from the CPR of 100 feet depth for \$50,000. The lots were bounded by the CPR trackage on the west, Carrall Street on the east, Pender on the north and the Royal City Mills on the south. A further four lots purchased by Lim Dot from the CPR for \$23,000 were purchased on Carrall Street. A lane was run north to south through these lots, making four lots into eight, and several two-storey brick buildings were built at a cost of \$33,000.¹⁰³

Perhaps one of the most infamous events in the City's history took place on Saturday, September 7, 1907, when the Asiatic Exclusion League held a parade as the first big event after their recent organization. The parade ended on Carrall Street where the participants gathered to hear several speakers sponsored by the League. Reports of the size of the crowd that gathered after the parade have estimated as many as 9,000 people remained to listen to the speakers.¹⁰⁴ The first

¹⁰² A sign painted on the brick face of the west side of the Marco Polo Restaurant can still be seen showing a hand pointing south with the words, "To Trains", written below.

¹⁰³ The Province, May 12, 1904.

¹⁰⁴ Robert E. Wynne, Reaction to the Chinese in the Pacific North West and British Columbia: 1850-1910. University of Washington, Unpub. Ph.D. Dissertation, 1964, p. 412.

speaker, C.M. Wordsworth, was followed by two local clergymen.¹⁰⁵ An effigy of the Lieutenant-Governor (Dunsmuir) was burned to protest his withholding of Royal Assent of a Provincial Act aimed at excluding Orientals.

The fourth speaker, A.E. Fowler, the secretary of the Seattle branch of the Asiatic Exclusion League harangued the crowd as to how they managed, two days earlier, to expel the Hindus from Bellingham (800 refugees from this eviction had crossed into Canada the day before.)¹⁰⁶ It was during Fowler's speech that the crowd became an ugly mob after a youth hurled a stone against the window of a nearby Chinese shop. The mob surged through Chinatown smashing everything in easy reach. The police attempted to intervene, but those arrested were quickly freed by other rioters. As the crowd passed Chinatown it moved directly towards Powell Street and "Little Tokyo". The Japanese, perhaps having several minutes warning, put up, by most accounts, a vicious defense. For over five hours the mob controlled the eastern part of downtown and only after midnight did they disperse.¹⁰⁷

On Sunday, crowds gathered once again to pay back the Japanese for having the effrontery to fight back. The Japanese quarter was

¹⁰⁵ One of the clergymen was the Rev. Wilson of the Presbyterian Church, and related to ex-Alderman Halford Wilson.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. p. 411.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 414.

¹⁰⁸ Loc. Cit.

stormed, but the rioters were beaten off by Japanese manning makeshift barricades. In the afternoon, giving up on Powell Street, the mob attempted to move back into Chinatown but were held off by police who had cordoned off the area.¹⁰⁸

3. Cleaning Up Chinatown: The Thirties

On September 16, 1937, the City Licensing Inspector, H.A. Urquhart, summarily cancelled the business licenses of three Pender Street cafes: B.C. Royal, Hong Kong Cafe and the Gee Kong Cafe. Mayor G.C. Miller issued a statement declaring that he was "out to clean up Chinatown".¹⁰⁹ The issue at hand was the employment of white girls in Chinatown. The previous April, the Mayor, Urquhart, and the owners of the Chinese cafes had carried on negotiations with regard to this type of employment in Chinatown. At that time the city had demanded that the white waitresses presently employed be phased out by not replacing those who resigned. The Chinese refused this request, but suggested instead that they would agree not to increase the number of white girls by hiring only on a replacement basis. They stated their position in a letter to the Mayor on May 6, 1937; a letter they claim was never answered.¹¹⁰ When interviewed by the Vancouver Sun in September, Inspector Urquhart stated:

"They did not live up to the assurances they gave".

According to Urquhart there were eight Chinese restaurants in the city employing white women. The girls involved expressed satisfaction with

¹⁰⁸ Loc. Cit.

¹⁰⁹ Vancouver Sun, September 16, 1937, p. 1.

¹¹⁰ Loc. Cit.

their employment. In April, when the matter was first broached they had gone en-masse to City Hall to protest the city's attitude towards them and their employment. One girl was particularly bitter:

... a bunch of fussy old bridge-playing gossips who are self-appointed directors of morals for girls in Chinatown. They are bound to get us out of here, but what will they do for us then. We must live, and heaven knows if a girl is inclined to go wrong, she can do it just as readily on Granville Street as she can down here.¹¹¹

As the controversy raged on, the three cafes involved continued to operate without licenses, awaiting a decision on their application for an injunction against the City and restraining City officials from prohibiting them to earn a livelihood.

On September 23, after the cafe owner's application for an injunction was dismissed by the B.C. Supreme Court, the police began surveillance of the Chinese cafes, noting all who entered so that they could be prosecuted at some future date.¹¹² Summons were issued for September 27, charging the three cafe owners, while at the same time the cafe owners launched an action against the City and License Inspector Urquhart declaring the by-laws under which their licenses were cancelled ultra-vires and in restraint of trade. On Saturday, September 25, before the cafe owners were to appear in court to face prosecution, the fifteen girls in question were dismissed from their jobs. On Monday afternoon, their licenses were renewed, and on Tuesday, September 28, City

¹¹¹Loc. Cit.

¹¹²Vancouver Sun, September 23, 1937, p. 3.

Prosecutor Oscar Orr reported to Mayor Miller that all other white waitresses employed by Chinese would be dismissed by October 1.

The next year, August of 1938, the issue arose again, when the C.K. Chop Suey Parlour had its license cancelled for employing two white girls. As before, the matter was settled out of court, with the dismissal of the waitresses.¹¹³ In an editorial of August 17, 1938, the Vancouver Sun stated:

In its action the City Council has the wholehearted support of the vast majority of Vancouver's citizens. The Chinese community if it be wise will submit to this overwhelming public opinion and conform to the wishes and rulings of the city in which it lives.¹¹⁴

The whole matter continued to simmer, and in March of 1939, City Council, after receiving a petition from white girls who wished to work in Chinatown cafes, decided to continue the ban. Chief of Police Foster stated:

In view of the conditions under which the girls are expected to work, it is almost impossible for them to be so employed without falling victims to some form of immoral life.¹¹⁵

Alderman H.D. Wilson, supporting the ban, added:

¹¹³The Province, August 17, 1938, p. 2.

¹¹⁴Vancouver Sun, August 17, 1938, p. 6.

¹¹⁵Vancouver Sun, March 21, 1939, p.

Under a provincial act the whole situation is in the Chief's hands. If in his opinion it is not in the interests of good morals to allow such employment he has the power to order against it.¹¹⁶

Cautious as always, the Corporation Counsel for the City qualified:

... that he is not so optimistic about the authority conferred in the Act. The Chief has no such blanket authority...he must prove in each individual case.¹¹⁷

4. The War Years?

"Move to Ban Chinese in Residential District"¹¹⁸

In February of 1941, while the "free" world waged war against Hitler's brand of racism, Vancouver's City Council turned its attention to its own private battle. A delegation, composed chiefly of women, appeared before the City's Zoning Committee, arguing that their property values in West Point Grey would drop if a Chinese was allowed to move into a new home that he and his wife had purchased in the area. The delegation urged the Committee to prohibit the sale of the house if possible in order to safeguard the residents of the area. They also asked that the City pass special legislation restricting Orientals to certain parts of the city.¹¹⁹

Although the aldermen recognized that the City had no power to interfere in the sale of the house, there was considerable support

¹¹⁶Loc. Cit.

¹¹⁷Loc. Cit.

¹¹⁸Vancouver News Herald, Februar 4, 1941, p. 4.

¹¹⁹Loc. Cit.

for the delegation's request. The Zoning Committee passed a resolution to set up a special committee to recommend by-law changes which, if possible, would restrict orientals to owning and occupying homes in specific localities.

Alderman H.D. Wilson urged Vancouver to follow the lead of Toronto and all Pacific Coast cities and restrict orientals to certain districts.¹²⁰ He went on to point out that orientals were spreading throughout the City, and that thirty of them had already bought property in the South Cambie area. This, Wilson pointed out, was an indication of what was to come in years ahead.¹²¹

Major J.W. Cornett said the finest home in the Little Mountain area is owned by an Oriental and Alderman George Buscombe suggested the provincial government might prohibit the registration of such deals. ...If anything can be done to segregate them and put the orientals in the same districts, we are all for it, remarked His Worship.¹²²

The following day the Chinese Consul-General in Vancouver, C.H. Pao, wrote the mayor, protesting the Council's action.

...again the action taken by your council is prejudicial, discriminatory, is a gross miscarriage of justice and casts reflection on the national dignity of China. It calculates to create ill feeling against the Chinese and to disturb the happy relations between Canada and China.¹²³

¹²⁰Loc. Cit.

¹²¹Loc. Cit.

¹²²Loc. Cit.

¹²³Vancouver News Herald, February 5, 1941.

The Chinese were not without their defenders and the University Women's Club entered the fray to chastise the City Fathers. The issue died as suddenly as it arose; although some diehards continued. Under the headline,

"Alderman H.D. Wilson Continues the Fight"

the Vancouver News Herald reported that City Council had abandoned its discriminatory zoning plans because they did not have the jurisdiction to implement them. Ald. Wilson was quoted as saying there was a way in which it could be done and he promised to discuss the matter with the provincial government.¹²⁴

In general the war years were a turning point for the Chinese in Vancouver, and for attitudes towards them in the city. China had become an ally in the struggle against Hitler and the Japanese. For the most part the various media were full of the heroic efforts of the Chinese to stem the Japanese advance over Asia. Oriental prejudice was transferred to the Japanese who were finally removed to internment camps throughout Alberta and the interior of B.C. Adding to and reflecting this change in attitude was a report submitted to Council by the City Health Inspector, Dr. Stewart Murray, which showed a decline in Vancouver's Chinese population. The report stated that the decline was the result of a negative death over birth rate. The Chinese population was declining at a rate of 6.67 per 1,000 while the Japanese were increasing at a rate of 12.53 per 1,000.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Vancouver News Herald, February 11, 1941, p.

¹²⁵ Vancouver Sun, October 15, 1941, p. 1.

This was of course due to the lack of adult women among the Chinese population and has been discussed earlier in this study.

5. ...Courage to the Sticking Place.

In May of 1967, a San Francisco firm, P.B.Q. & D. Inc. submitted to Vancouver City Council, freeway proposals that had been commissioned the year before. A part of the favoured proposal was dubbed the Carrall Street link, an alignment that was to run directly through Chinatown. Banner headlines announced the potential destruction of the area as:

"Concrete Knife Through Heart of Chinatown"

At first, caught by surprise, some Chinatown leaders expressed favor for the idea. On June 2, Harry Fan, the spokesman for the Chinatown Property Owners Association, felt that the freeway could do nothing but good for the area. However, as soon as the full implications of the plan became generally known throughout the community tremendous vocal and visible opposition to the plan developed. Harry Fan reversed his original stand, and with other Chinese leaders began to vigorously oppose the proposal.

On July 5, seventeen delegations, many from Chinatown led by the Chinese Benevolent Association, presented briefs to the City Council, opposing the freeway alignment. In the face of this massive campaign Council reversed their original endorsement of the Carrall Street link and instructed the planning consultants to prepare a study of an alternative along Gore Avenue. The alternate study was received in October and showed that the Gore alignment would cost several million dollars more than the original proposal.

On October 17 Council again reversed its decision and decided to route the freeway back through Chinatown. The next day Dean Leung,

co-chairman of the Chinese Benevolent Association and Harry Fan of the Chinese Property Owners Association expressed their bitterness at Council's move. They stated that public feeling throughout the Chinese community was running very high and the freeway would still be opposed. The same day most of Chinatown was decorated with black banners in mourning.

On October 23 a public meeting was held in Chinatown and a seventeen-member committee was elected to lead the fight against the freeway and to lobby various levels of government. By October 31, the committee had its first success when at another public meeting in Chinatown, Alderman Rankin reversed his stand and admitted that his vote in favor of the freeway had been wrong.

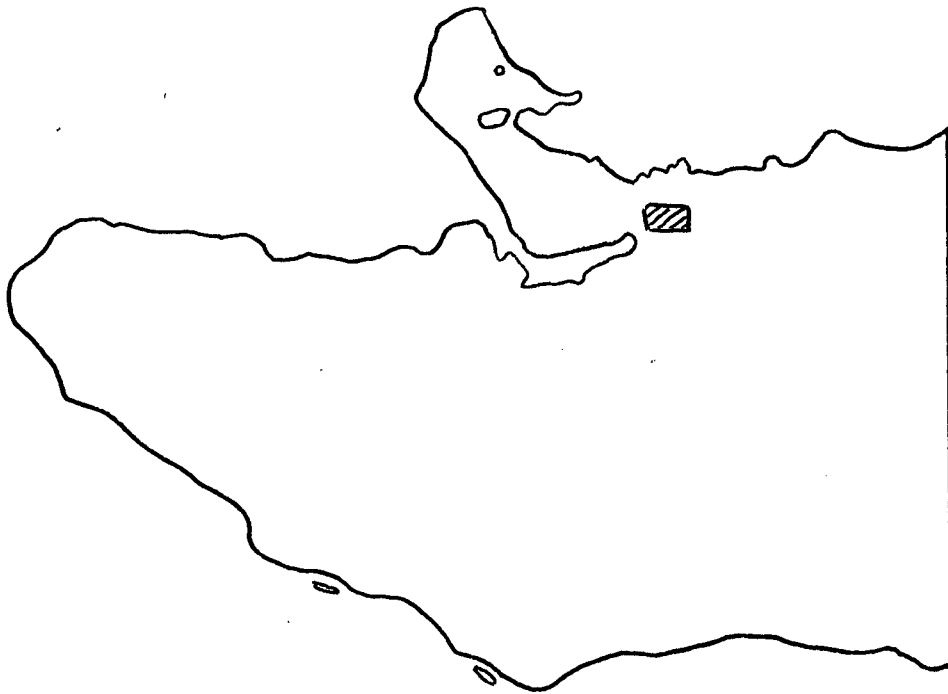
In the face of a massive public campaign, on January 10, 1968, City Council again reversed its decision and voted to change the Carrall Street link. In November of 1968, Foon Sien, one of the leaders of the Chinese Benevolent Association, received a promise from Mayor Campbell that the freeway matter was closed, and that if there was to be any freeway alignment it would not go through Chinatown.

III. CHINATOWN TODAY

A. Physical Space.

1. Description and Boundaries.

Chinatown is presently located on the easterly fringe of Vancouver's Central Business District, almost immediately north of the easterly end of False Creek.



Greater Chinatown, including residential Strathcona, and scattered satellite locii of activity north of Hastings Street may roughly be described as that area bounded by Carrall Street on the west, Powell on the north, Vernon on the east, and Prior on the south. The main focus of this study is the commercial and cultural core of the community, and this area, defined by intensive Chinese commercial, industrial, and service uses is bounded by Carrall on the west, Gore on the east, Hastings on the north and Georgia on the south.

Pender Street, one block east and two blocks west of Main Street, is the spine of this core. It is on these three blocks that the majority of commercial and social uses are situated. Main Street, between Keefer and Hastings has a number of Chinese commercial uses intermixed with non-Chinese uses, while Keefer and Georgia Street, mainly east of Main Street are dominated by Chinese industrial and warehousing uses.

In the core area, along Pender, Chinatown can be logically divided into two distinct parts. With Main Street as the division, the two blocks west of Main are the location of the major tourist oriented restaurants and curio shops as well as the base of most of the cultural and social organizations. This block maintains the original buildings that for the most part, have a distinctly oriental flavor.

"While the Caucasian community was competing with higher and more ornate buildings, the Chinese were developing their own distinguished style of architecture. The primary feature is the recessed balcony which often dominates one or more storeys above the ground floor. The motif was apparently

brought over directly from China... The best Chinese buildings are four storeys high with tiers of balconies and with shaped gables and finials punctuating the roofline.."126

East of Main Street to Gore Avenue and south along the west side of Gore to Georgia is the Chinatown that is frequented by Chinese consumers who support the numerous meat, grocery and produce stores located there.

2. Land Use.

In 1965 and again in 1971 a land use field survey of the core area were carried out by the Vancouver Planning Department. These surveys were particularly thorough and gave the total amount of square feet devoted to various uses on each lot. This data has been converted here into percentages so that comparison over time may be more easily made. The field surveys were of two kinds: one a general classification and the other a detailed functional breakdown of different uses. There is only six years between the two surveys and although this is not a great enough period to show significant change in the physical structure of a normal community some indications of direction can be glimpsed.

¹²⁶ City of Vancouver, Gastown-Chinatown Beautification Studies, "Architectural and Historical Survey and Evaluations", (prepared by Harold Kalman), 1973, p. 7.

Table X

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Chinatown Land Use General Categories		
Category	1965	1971
Chinese	25.1%	25.8%
Intermediate	8.4	11.3
Non-Chinese	25.2	26.3
Vacant	9.7	7.3
Surface	11.2	10.5
Residential	20.	18.7

In terms of these broad categories it can be seen that the major changes were an increase in the intermediate and non-Chinese uses in the area showing a trend towards a less internally supported commercial structure and a more open and regionally oriented economic function. There was also a move towards the greater utilization of remaining open space in the core and a drop in the floor space utilized for residential purposes.

In the more detailed field survey these results were confirmed with a 3.4% increase in restaurants (basically an intermediate use) a small drop in services (serving the enclave). Increases in retail shops catering to art, curio articles were up 1.5% .

Changes over a longer period of time would be more startling and revealing; however, reliable descriptions of Chinatown are scarce for earlier periods. In 1936, for Vancouver's Golden Jubilee, a small booklet was prepared, describing Chinatown¹²⁸ and some interesting comparisons and insights can be gained from this.

¹²⁷City of Vancouver, Chinatown Beautification Studies, "Field Survey Land Use", 1965 and 1971.

¹²⁸Q. Yip, Vancouver Chinatown, Vancouver, Pacific Press, 1936, pp. 1-48.

Table IX

Detailed Classification of Land Use¹²⁹

Category	1965	1971
1	5.4 %	6.6 %
2	.9	1.2
3	7.2	7.5
4	.07	0
5	1.2	1.
6	5.7	9.1
7	1.5	1.4
8	4.6	6.4
9	8.0	8.2
10	7.3	7.2
11	12.5	11.0
12	.9	.5
13	21.	19.2
14	.4	.5
15	1.0	.4
16	11.1	11.5
17	0	0
18	9.8	7.5
19	.6	.1
20	0	0

There were twenty restaurants in Chinatown in 1936. Today there are 32 restaurants, many of which, because of higher prices, cocktail lounges, and decor, were built to especially cater to the Chinese population outside of the Strathcona area and the white population of Vancouver. Restaurants such as the Yen Lock, the Wayen, the Asia Gardens, and the Chinese Pavillion definitely cater to a higher income group. The startling increase in merchandise shops has been most noticeable in the antique and curio and gift variety store. No longer do the low income groups shop for clothes and other household needs in Chinatown.

¹²⁹ Loc. Cit. See Appendix II for definition of categories.

Banks have increased from one to four, perhaps not only because of the commercial expansion, but also because of more money invested in Canada and not sent back to China. Real estate offices have increased from zero to seven, reflecting an interest in more desirable residential location. Chinese schools have dropped from six to two in Chinatown but have increased correspondingly in suburban areas throughout Greater Vancouver. Barber shops are down from twelve to eight, perhaps reflecting the change of ratio between the sexes in the area.

3. Land Ownership.

Over 90% of the land in the core area is owned by Chinese. This, of course, is to be expected; however, a significant amount of this land is owned by non-profit societies.

The previous section on land use showed over a five year period a trend towards greater utilization of space and greater intensity of use. Floor space in use for institutional use actually increased by 2% between 1965-61; however, this ability of the various associations to maintain themselves in physical space is more a function of caretaker ownership rather than an indication of the strength of the traditional social structure. The amount of land owned by the various societies is perhaps the greatest concentration of highly valuable land and by private societies in the City of Vancouver. It provides tremendous potential for co-operative efforts involving the conservation and beautification of the area.

All of the changes in the Chinatown area are subtle but clear. The character and nature of the community is slowly but surely moving in new directions. Only twenty-seven years have elapsed since the repeal

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

592/173

ST.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

190/590

ST.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

192/590

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

592/192

592/186

PENDER

ST.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

190/592

MAIN

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

192/592

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

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594/192

KEEPER 594/186

ST.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

COLUMBIA

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100

LAND OWNERSHIP BY
NON-PROFIT CHINESE
SOCIETIES

CITY OF VANCOUVER
1973 ASSESSMENT
RECORDS

of the Oriental Exclusion Act; the next twenty-five years should see an acceleration of the rate of change along the new directions that have been noted. Chinatown is losing its firm cultural and social hold on the Chinese community. These allegiances are being placed elsewhere. The functions it served are not important to the younger Chinese. As Chinatown gives up its old ethnic oriented functions, it is taking on new and more universal functions important to the Vancouver community as a whole. James and Robert Simmons have this to say regarding the Chinese communities in Toronto and Vancouver:

In each case the community is beginning to disperse because it occupies the fringe of highly valuable downtown commercial areas -- land which is valuable for other uses, and unattractive to the increasingly middle-class Chinese residents. The change shows itself in two ways. First, there is an increasing commercialization of cultural differences, as only enterprises capitalizing on the ethnic group's unique flavour and central city position survive -- the highly visible restaurants and gift shops. Secondly, the process acculturation is in a considerably advanced state -- the "Chinese" waitresses and shop girls speak pure Canadian despite the slits in the sides of their skirts.¹³⁰

¹³⁰ James Simmons, Urban Canada, Toronto, Copp Clark, 1969, p. 142. Investigation shows that the Simmons' impression is not entirely accurate. Vancouver's Chinatown is not dispersing but expanding with new Chinese uses at the fringes of expansion, and tourist uses, involving higher quality restaurants, at retail, devolving to the center.

B. Visible Social Problems and Trends

1. Introduction.

An overview of present social problems in Chinatown of interest to the public official presents a kaleidoscope of residual issues from the past (including some with their roots overseas), interacting and given new significance through their effect on the area's reaction to contemporary challenges. These new challenges include: a rapidly changing social structure, a politically fragmented and unstable leadership, a changing economic base, increased land values, aging physical structures, changing land use, and other related physical problems unique to communities peripheral to the C.B.D.

The more physical of these changes have been discussed in the previous chapter; however, here it is hoped that they will gain more significance as their relationship with a number of outstanding social problems is outlined.

2. Social Indicators.

Before discussing some of the specific social problems evident in Chinatown, a quick review of the major social indicators presently available for the area will provide an interesting backdrop to the interaction of problem areas.

The indicators presented here are for the most part based on a larger area than just that occupied by the commercial core of Chinatown. Unfortunately both census divisions and municipal local area divisions divide at Main Street and generally extend as far east as Clarke Drive. Fortunately the bulk of the area for which statistics are available comprises the immediate residential hinterland of Chinatown and the greater

Chinatown area described in the previous section. This larger area, chosen for this study by factors beyond our control, is valid and legitimate for the discussion of broader social issues that tend to know no artificial boundaries.

The present population of the greater target area known as Strathcona is 11,540 persons. Only 34% of the population of this area claim English as a mother tongue, while 47% have Chinese as a mother tongue. Of the total population 22% are over 65 years of age, and this is almost double that of the Vancouver average.¹³¹

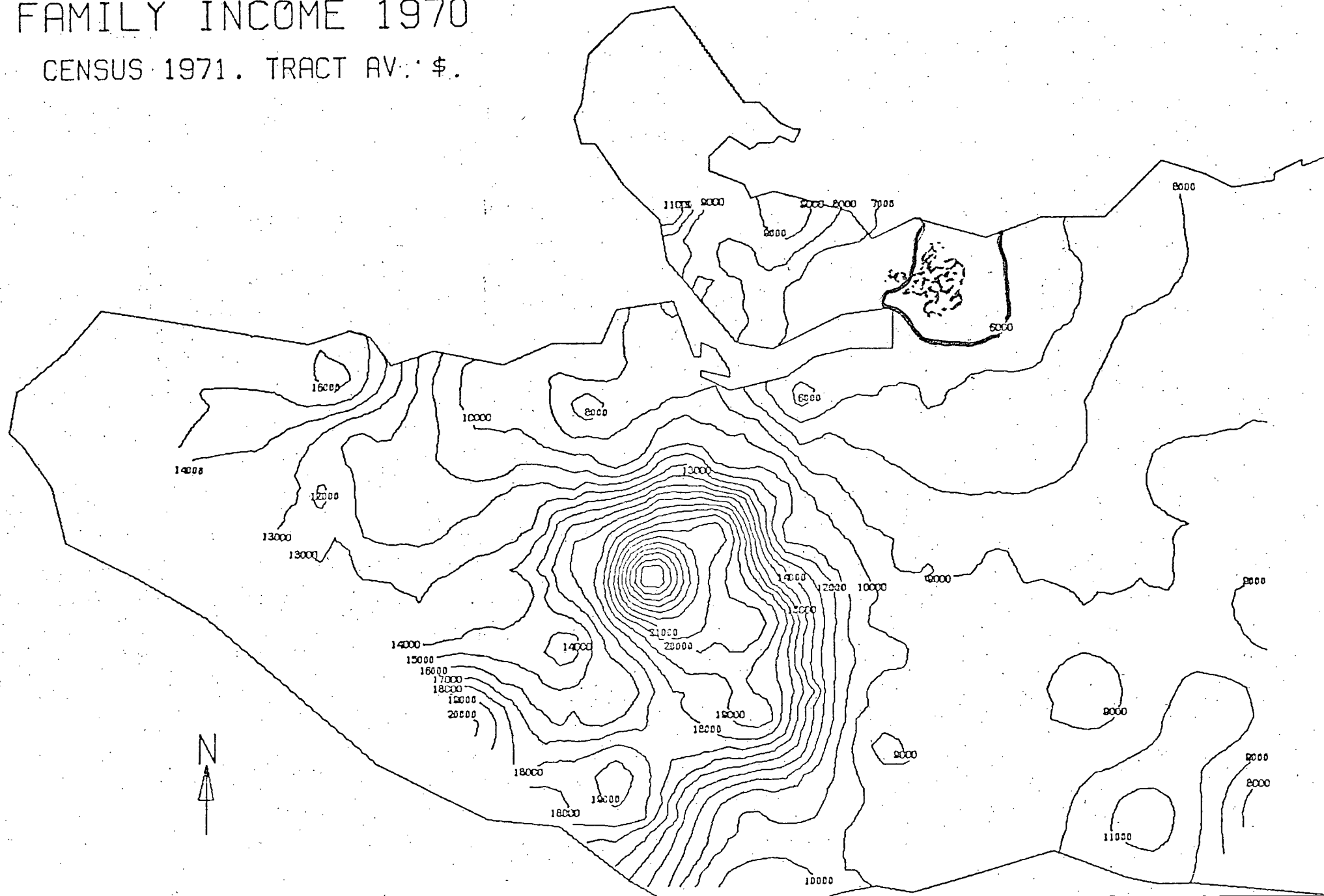
Prepared in 1968 and based on older census data, United Community Services of Vancouver produced a social-economic rating of the various local areas of the City.¹³² The index prepared consisted of three variables: income, occupational status, and education. The highest numbers indicated the lowest socio-economic ranking and the spread moved from Strathcona (including Chinatown) at 117.0 to Shaughnessy at 8.4 . This vast disparity in a number of variables remains clear in the following income map, based on 1971 data.

¹³¹ Canada, Census, 1971.

¹³² Barry Mayhew, Local Areas of Vancouver, United Community Services of Greater Vancouver, January, 1967.

FAMILY INCOME 1970

CENSUS 1971. TRACT AVERAGE \$.



3. Problem Overview.

Perhaps the most pervasive problem in Chinatown is the ever increasing gap between the social reality and the physical-economic structure of the enclave. Rapidly changing cultural values, and the disintegration and assimilation of the traditional social structure have combined to bring about a dysfunctional relationship between the once complementary physical and social structures of the community. Where once these structures were mutually reinforcing against a hostile and foreign environment, they are now interacting with external forces and moving at different rates of speed. While the inexorable forces of land economics and consumer demand change the nature and function of physical space within Chinatown, a badly fragmented and disoriented social structure is impotent and, in some cases, unwilling to resist or shape this change.

It is the writer's experience that one of the most common errors on the part of public officials in their approach to Chinatown is to deal with the community as an indivisible, homeogeneous entity. It is not. Prewar Chinatown, as described in an earlier chapter, has always been internally divided by ascriptive, dialect and idealogical differences; however, the fact that the community was 90% male, largely located in one area of the city, saw themselves as sojourners, and were contained by the bounds of external discrimination, did provide a homogeneity that is no longer a major factor.

Today the sexual imbalance is negligible, the family formation rate is high, allegiance is now to the family unit -- not to the male clan society, -- residential location has scattered, Canada is seen as

a permanent home, and discriminatory attitudes have all but disappeared. The type of heterogeneity developing in the Chinese community extends well beyond the walls of the ethnic ghetto and is becoming an integral part of the same differences that exist within the dominant social structure (age, income, education). It is now these standard variables that are playing the major role as social determinants in the Chinese community. Traditional values and structure erode slowly, in fact it might be truer to say they atrophy, rather than completely disappear. Some manage to adapt and reappear in different guises, and it is this factor, which might be termed temporal feedback, that makes ordinary urban problems in Chinatown very complex.

4. The New Adult Immigrant.

New Chinese immigrants are of a very different mold than the original Chinese settlers in Canada. They are from Hong Kong, a large, modern and fast-moving metropolis. More often than not they have direct experience with slum and public housing environments.

Deficiency in English, particularly writing skills, is a severe handicap for the Chinese immigrant. It is probably the major factor restricting both skilled and unskilled immigrants to low income forms of employment. An ability to cope with written English is a prerequisite of skilled qualifications (involving trade examinations and other licensing procedures), while a modicum of ability to deal with verbal English is a very necessary requirement for entrance into vocational and other educational programs leading to higher income employment. The nature of very low income employment itself mitigates

against the time and energy left over for educational development.

It is this lack of language facility that forces so many new immigrants to become dependent on the social and cultural amenities supplied by Chinatown. Preferred employment becomes that where minimum adjustment is necessary. Restaurants and other industries such as food processing, canneries and the garment industry, have grown up in proximity to Chinatown, close to their potential labor pool. These jobs demand hard work and long hours, and leave little opportunity to improve language skills.

The 1961 census indicated that the majority of employed Strathcona residents were engaged in service occupations. This category includes cooks, butchers, waiters, porters, bellhops and housekeepers. The next largest employment categories for Chinese were cannery workers, food processing occupations, garment industry and other craftsmen.

While 1971 census figures on employment are not yet available, it may be postulated that a stream of unskilled immigrants (of unspecified size) is continuing, and will continue, to provide Chinatown with unskilled labour and continue to be dependent on the existence of Chinatown -- even though the overall composition of immigrant type may be changing.

While many new immigrants without skills continue in the future to have an economic dependence on Chinatown, cultural and social affiliations are matters that are not so clear. To the new Chinese immigrant from Hong Kong, Vancouver's Chinatown presents an anachronistic and provincial social structure. It is based on the needs and customs

of immigrants of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These earlier immigrants were rural oriented. Ascriptive and local ties played a major part in binding the social structure together. Today's immigrants are not attracted to the traditional organization of Chinatown. It is almost foreign and certainly unrelated to their particular needs. The decline of the traditional social structure of Chinatown, based on clan, locality and dialect divisions, is being complemented by the rise of a new social and cultural framework based on universal problem structures, often centering on government social and cultural programs, local issues and on new ideological foundations.

Since 1949 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the traditional elite of Vancouver's Chinatown have been challenged by a new leadership working within the community. Many of the traditional organizations have, although informally, two wings -- one left and one right. In recent years, as the traditional purposes and functions that provided the practical *raison d'être* for the Chinatown social structure have lost their relevance, a more modern ethnic ethic, based on the organizational methods and accomplishments of the mainland have taken their place. "So-called" leftist leaders are now firmly entrenched at secondary and semi-upper levels of many of the executives of various Chinatown associations. While still blocked from the positions of highest leadership in the existing social structure, this secondary leadership has recently turned its attention to spearheading community-wide mass based movements. Traditional leaders, while not opposed to the aims of such campaigns as "Stop the Fire Hall", "Stop the Quebec-Columbia Connector" and others, have been slow to take the

initiative and have, by default, lost much influence over the wider Chinese community. New Hong Kong immigrants, living in Strathcona or, more often, in other areas of the city, are in some cases attracted and in other cases disinterested in these movements and issues, depending on their own outlook. Those who are attracted will participate under the new leadership, while those who are disinterested are attracted by neither the new nor traditional structures. The result in either case has been a lack of recruits to buttress the old social structure and the growth of a large community of new immigrants more easily assimilated into the dominant social pattern because of their lack of identification with the unique but traditional sub-structure. A major factor in the non-introduction of new Chinese immigrants to the enclave has been the saturation of the available housing stock in the Chinatown area. In Strathcona, immediately east of Chinatown, exists the only suitable family units available for Chinese wishing to reside close to the core area. Strathcona, in residential terms, bounded by Gore, Campbell, Hastings and Atlantic, contains only 1300 housing units.¹³³ A recent survey found that only 5% of the homeowners were new residents in the area (since April, 1971), and of these 86% had lived elsewhere in Vancouver first; only 6% came directly from outside Canada.¹³⁴ A 1966 retail study of the Strathcona area found that only 8% of the residents

¹³³ City of Vancouver, Strathcona Rehabilitation Report, July, 1971, p. 2.

¹³⁴ Raymond Young, Strathcona Rehabilitation Project Evaluation (incomplete), 1973

had resided in Canada for less than a year and that 74% had been residents for 10 years or longer.¹³⁵

5. New Immigrant Youth.

Juvenile delinquency among Chinatown youth is becoming increasingly visible. This phenomenon is almost exclusively limited to immigrant youth. Although major causes can be easily isolated, little effort has been made to remove them. We have continued to treat the effects. Our reaction has been to intensify police patrols and increase monitoring and control through street workers.

Major causes of delinquency among Chinese immigrant youth may be described as:

1. Cultural Shock - a profound uprooting of normal patterns of behavior, values and attitudes - giving rise to general social disorientation.
 2. Social Isolation - The social structure of Vancouver's Chinatown is anachronistic. It is based on the needs of the first wave of peasant Chinese labourers in the 19th Century. The institutional structure of the social and cultural community has changed little since that time other than entering a period of long term decline.
- The new Chinese immigrant usually from Hong Kong is

¹³⁵"A Study of Retail Expenditures For Use in the Analysis of the Feasibility of Shopping Facilities in the Strathcona Redevelopment Area", (Regional Marketing Surveys), May, 1966.

familiar with a modern urban environment much more fast moving and metropolitan than Vancouver. Immigrant youth arriving in Canada from Hong Kong often have experience of slum, tenement or public housing living. They reject the provincial and archaic structure of Vancouver's Chinatown and are in turn rejected by the dominant western social structure including second and third generation Chinese. Lacking identification, they form groups or gangs (Blue Angels, Phantom Riders, Golden Skippers), which provide a structure to ease their marginality and a framework within which they can compete for the status denied them by the dominant white and the minority ethnic social systems. A major factor appears to be experience of delinquency in Hong Kong, which provides an alternative to normal behaviour.

3. Education - Many of the personal relationships which give rise to the group formation described above, develop in the New Canadian classes in the public school system. It is here that the new immigrant's social isolation manifests itself in institutional form. It is here also in the public school system that the juvenile immigrant first faces the harsh realities of his difficulty (often inability) to successfully adapt to the demands and pressures of a culturally foreign institutional milieu. Often language difficulties are never satisfactorily overcome, leading to low academic performance and

frustration to meet social expectations. The fact that this frustration is shared by friends in a similar situation adds strength and impetus to juvenile group formation. Peer pressure and high frustration at secondary levels of education lead to a growing drop-out rate among immigrant youth.

4. Family Relationships - Frustration at the lack of educational attainment is compounded by prevailing circumstances and attitudes of immigrant parents. Chinese youth, perhaps more than any other sub-group in society, are, because of the emphasis placed on education in Chinese culture, under great pressure from parents to do well at school.

Failing to live up to these expectations for reasons not considered or understood by parents who themselves are under-educated, puts a great strain on the new-Canadian youth.

While the immigrant youth is being driven away from school and is being put under the opposite pressure from parents, he has to cope with two further problems of familial strain both of which require significant adjustment.

- a. Generation and Culture Gap

We recognize the generation gap in our own culture as being a serious barrier to communication and understanding between youth and adults. The same problem is two-fold

in immigrant families. The parents usually poorly educated and slower to adapt, are faced with children who are not only removed from them by a generation, but who are also irrevocably culturally different. The new Canadian youth by virtue of his exposure to the educational system is partially socialized and trapped between two cultures. Of these cultures, he rejects one, and the other disvalues him.

b. Lack of Family Supervision

The totally nuclear family is a relatively new social phenomena to Chinese culture. While the extended family involving aunts, uncles, cousins, etc., living under one roof popularly depicted in Western literature was never really common in China, ties between relatives were much closer. Grandparents invariably played a large role in supervising and socializing children.

The immigrant family newly moved to Canada is usually totally nuclear and cut off from the extended family contacts it enjoyed in Hong Kong. Due to the low economic status of the immigrant family, both parents are usually working. As there are no immediate relatives in Vancouver, the result is a tremendous difference in the amount of family supervision provided to children. The immigrant youth is thus faced with an amount of freedom with which he is often not ready or mature enough to cope.

6. The Elderly.

As has been noted in preceding chapters, Chinese immigration prior to World War II was almost exclusively male dominated. These sojourners, most of whom never did return home after 1949, brought their wives and families over to join them, if they had families; however, many had no families. Many had also sent most of their savings overseas to be invested in land; all of this was lost. It is not surprising that the present population profile for the Chinatown area is heavily weighted in the top age brackets. As has been mentioned earlier, Chinatown and its immediate environs supports twice the normal proportion of persons sixty-five and over as the average for the city. In the Strathcona Rehabilitation Project area defined earlier, officials have estimated that over 50% of the homeowners in the area are over sixty-five.

The elderly in Chinatown present an almost unique case of a sizeable sub-group, spatially identifiable and totally dependent on the social, cultural and economic amenities offered by one specific area of Vancouver. Friends, clubs, societies, reading rooms, co-op houses, coffee shops and grocery stores are the core of their existence. Because of their age and dependence on proximity to Chinatown, the Chinese elderly are the hardest hit by demolition, rising rents, and relocation. Many are in poor health, but refuse nursing home care, as it would mean a totally isolated existence, too far from Chinatown to make life really meaningful.

The Chinese societies, particularly clan and locality types, continue to play a large part in the lives of many of the old men resident in the area. A common form of residence in the Chinatown and

Strathcona areas is the Kung S'o, or communal house. These are houses or buildings owned and maintained by a society for the convenience of older members, who live together in a self-help arrangement. Several houses of this type benefitted from the Strathcona Rehabilitation Project, which made grant/loans available to owner-occupiers and non-profit groups for the improvement of housing. Many more of the elderly live in rooming houses and old hotels, both in the core area and near to it. Much of this type of housing is also owned by societies. The Freemasons make rooms in their Chinatown property available at \$18.00 a month to members, when the market rate ranges from \$40.00 to \$60.00 .¹³⁶

Recently, sparked by the Federal New Horizons Program, a major society of the elderly has been formed with substantial support, in terms of space, staff, time and facilities, from the Vancouver Parks Board. The Kuei Ying Wu has, in less than a year's operation, gathered 500 active members. Membership has had to be curtailed due to limitations of facilities available for meetings and activities.

It has been clear for several years that each of the thirty or forty clan and locality associations could not continue to sustain meaningful programs and activities for the dwindling number of elderly members. At the same time, inertia and tradition were against a joint voluntary scheme of integrated services in this field. The New Horizons grant has allowed another alternative to develop outside the ethnic social structure, unfettered by parochial competitiveness and concerns.

¹³⁶ Harry Con - verbal communication.

The decline of the traditional associational nature of Chinatown will be discussed in the next section; however, it should be pointed out here that, as a general rule, the development of a totally new structure through the failure of the existing structure to adapt and remain functional, presages the fossilization and eventual extinction of the old.

7. The Societies.

Chinatown boasts over eighty organizations of different kinds within its limited borders.¹³⁷ Many of these are dying along with the last survivors of the first wave of immigration. Hardest hit are the clan and locality associations relying on traditional ascriptive factors for their foundation. The Chinese Nationalist League of Canada and the Chinese Benevolent Association have because of their growing political irrelevance, also declined. With perhaps the exception of the Chinese Freemasons¹³⁸ and one or two other societies where leadership has been available, the associations are losing their appeal to Canadian born Chinese. New immigrants for reasons already discussed are not attracted. Many of the functions once the domain of the societies have been eroded by increasing government aid and new social programs. Their judicial and representative functions have become less important and less called upon due to changing social attitudes towards orientals by the host society. Recent immigration amnesties have resulted in a lessening of

¹³⁷ W. Wilmott, "The Study of Chinese in B.C.", B.C. Studies, No. 4, Spring, 1970, p. 51.

¹³⁸ Stanford Lyman, "Chinese Secret Societies in the Occident", The Asian in the West, Social Science of Humanities, Publication No. 4, University of Nevada, 1970, p. 45.

tension with regard to the illegal immigrant issues and persons in the illegal category have less need to be dependent on the shelter and protection of the various associations.

"As the Chinese have gained access to the political legal, occupational and social positions once open only to Caucasians, they have drifted away from Chinatown losing interest in its insult institutions, and shut themselves off from its benefits and influence."¹³⁹

One appointment of vital interest to Chinatown has been that of Mr. Harry Con to the Federal Government's ten member Immigration Advisory Board. This appointment stems from the Liberal Party and Mr. Con's long service in the constituency association of a prominent cabinet minister. It is clear in this case that access to political influence has not emerged from strong organization within Chinatown but from participation both inside and outside of the enclave's social structure. Other appointments of prominent Chinese to the Historical Area Advisory Board, and the Town Planning Commission have been the result of activities within and without the Chinatown community. It is clear that a trend now exists for the integration of individual and position at the interface of areas of common concern. The influence of this phenomenon moves both ways and those leaders thus co-opted into responsible positions outside the enclave also find their positions strengthened inside. This has only been possible with the abdication of traditional chains of authority.

¹³⁹ Loc. Cit.

8. The New Alliances.

While many of the traditional supports of the old social structure have crumbled, new organizations, sometimes better described as ad-hoc movements, have arisen to provide a focus for social activity in Chinatown. These new movements, most often spearheaded by young professionals or others either uninterested or blocked for political or traditional reasons from assuming leadership through the existing structure, are generally centered around local Vancouver issues. They tend to be more modern in their organization and approach, although traditional lines of influence within the leadership structure of the enclave generally play a part in their makeup.

Two recent movements of this type: "Stop the Firehall" and "Cultural Centre" issues have been indicative of this type of spontaneous organization. While some of the traditional societies have attempted to revitalize themselves by attracting youthful members, these attempts for the most part have failed because of severe generational conflict.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand the ad-hoc movement has managed to successfully combine the skills and expertise of the younger professionals and activists with the experience and influence of older members of the community.

The formation of the Chinatown Property Owners and Merchants Association, organized around the need for the community to participate with the City in beautification plans points to the development of a more modern (in foundation and function) society. Although Strathcona

¹⁴⁰W. Wilmott, "Chinese Clan Associations in Vancouver", Man, Vol. IXIV, No. 49, 1964, pp. 33-37.

(the residential hinterland) is not the major focus of this study, the development of SPOTA (Strathcona Property Owners and Tenants Association) and its success in actively participating with all three levels of government preceedes and parallels similar developments in the Chinatown core.

There is one word that almost always triggers anxiety and caution in public officials concerned with Chinatown. That word is "leftist". Often we speak in hushed tones about the right and the "reds" of Chinatown, thinking of international repercussions, or of Red Guards parading down the streets. There seems to be little substance to these fears. Issues tend to be local, and the left and right refer for the most part to modern or traditional approaches to the problem at hand. Those who are described as leftist in Chinatown are sometimes socialists, but by and large they are just those who percieve and feel that the cultural mainline in the future lies in China proper rather than Taiwan. There is a large middle group, not really oriented one way or the other: they tend to be overlooked.

New organizations, in particular ad-hoc movements, tend to be led and dominated by what may be termed the "left" in Chinatown. Established new leaders are generally those who have been denied leadership in traditional circles. This trend has opened up new and important roles and positions within the enclave that did not exist before. As the enclave becomes more open, links external to the Chinese community begin to play a more important part in relation to the shifts of status, power, and influence controlled by individual leaders.

9. The Residential Hinterland.

Chinatown's immediate residential hinterland, Strathcona, has in the past been the haven of middle and higher income Britons, Jews, Slavs, and most prominently Italians and Portugese since the district was developed in the late 1890's and early 1900's. The area with its large Victorian houses, became irresistible to the Chinese after the repeal of the Oriental Exclusion Act and the beginning of normal family formation among the Chinese males. The Italian community has inexorably been pushed and pulled eastward into newer and better accomodations in Grandview.

The housing capacity of Strathcona has become saturated in terms of its present single-family structure, and new immigrants have been forced to find accomodation away from the established enclave. As an economic support (both in terms of consumers and employment) Strathcona is quickly losing importance as a buttress to the commercial core area. The merchants of Chinatown, realizing that less than 10% of the total Chinese population of the G.V.R.D. reside in Strathcona percieve the residential area as prime land for expansion to meet the burgeoning needs of increasing regional business brought by Hong Kong immigrants and tourists. The core area no longer exists as the centre of an isolated enclave but as the heart of a diverse and heterogeneous regional population.

While the number and nature of present social problems in Chinatown appears formidable, professionally trained Hong Kong immigrants, and second generation Canadian Chinese have reacted to the challenge. Taking advantage of federal government funding programs, numerous O.F.Y., L.I.P.,

L.E.A.P. demonstration projects, and housing projects have been established. These programs while highlighting problems (in some cases for funding purposes making them seem more serious than they are) have had a significant impact on the community. Perhaps the greatest and most hopeful of these impacts has been the creation of new and active organizations involving a wide range of interested participants. In effect as the nature of the community and its problems change, the community's viability has remained unimpaired.

IV CHINATOWN - A PLANNING FRAMEWORK

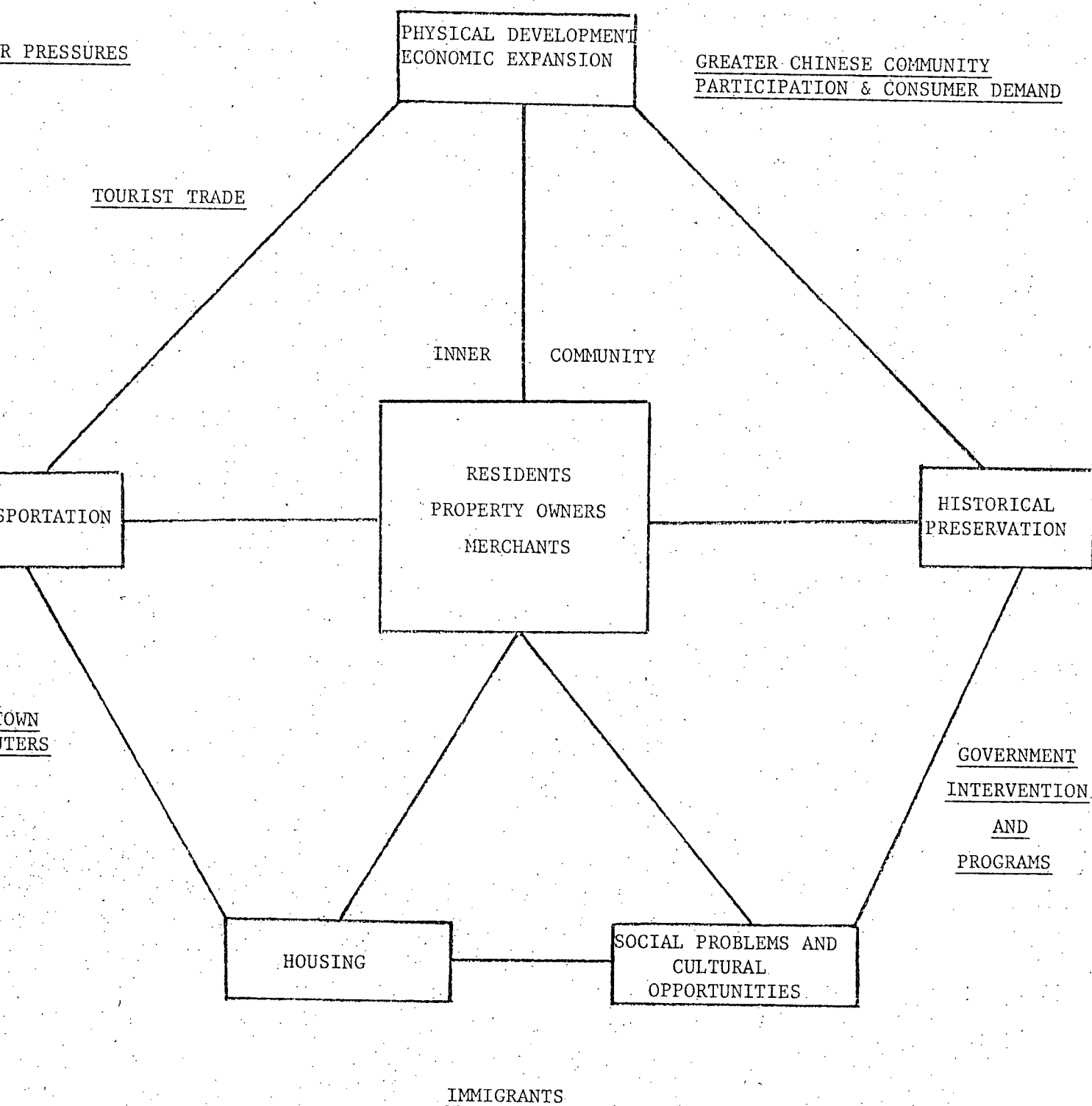
A. The Problem Restated.

Alvin Toffler has popularized the term "future shock". It describes "the shattering stress and disorientation that we induce in individuals by subjecting them to too much change in too short a time."¹⁴⁰

Chinatown is a community that is undergoing rapid compounded change on several levels at once. This multi-dimensional change has transformed a once self-contained and self-regulating social structure into a partially open, fragmented and disoriented system of social relationships, in which traditional and modern values, attitudes, constraints, and patterns of activity, compete to establish a new balance.

Chinatown, by virtue of its location alone, is of strategic importance to transportation planners; it straddles the major eastward access to the Central Business District. It is of vital interest to planners of conservation and preservation because of its historical and architectural background; to social planners because of its unique social and cultural structure and problems; to housing planners because of its function as part of the hotel and low rent rooming house district of the City; and to economic planners because of its growing regional economic significance. These major interest areas combined with internal changes in the community itself, pose problems as complex as any which planners must solve. It is clear that over the next few years, five major areas of planning concern will provide the broad framework within which specific issues will arise. Most single issues will be related to one or a combination of the dominant themes below:

¹⁴⁰ Alvin Toffler, Future Shock, Toronto, Bantam Books, 1970, p. 2.



The major planning areas, diagrammatically represented above, are related in much more than just a theoretical sense. In a very practical way, because of the small spatial concentration of Chinatown activity, chains of cause and effect are short; thus problems in one sphere tend to have an immediate and significant effect on the others. While these relationships have been recognized, the difficulties presented by their interaction have not yet received the comprehensive attention required to provide long range solutions.

Chinatown is a distinctive entity, easily defined in history, culture, function and space. While the same may be true of other areas of Vancouver, Chinatown stands out in these respects above all others. Important administratively to the planner, Chinatown, as character area, is small enough to be manageable.

The City of Vancouver is embarking on a local area planning approach in an effort to get closer to specific area problems that require solutions. In concluding this thesis, a short discussion of the five dominant problem areas will be offered as a first step towards the design of a planning structure within which the character and functions of Chinatown may best be allowed to develop and change.

B. Economic Expansion and Development.

While the traditional social structure of Chinatown may be withering, Chinatown as an economic unit and a commercial entity is far from fading away. Indeed, it is rapidly being redeveloped and spilling over the fringes of what were once its borders. Two major trends in this sphere of activity are presently discernable and both are increasing

pressure for higher intensity land use and contributing to the gradual loss of the remaining physical manifestation of the older traditional enclave.

First, along the spine of Chinatown (Pender Street) the division between the tourist area (West of Main Street) and the Chinese area (East of Main Street) has been reinforced. The tourist area has seen the slow growth of curio and tourist oriented retail uses. Several fires in recent years have hastened this trend. The redevelopment of the Lee Building, after a fire last year, is highly visible evidence of this activity. The Lee Association, once located in upper floors of this building, has been relocated to a less expensive and less prime location to make way for new retail shops and restaurant uses. Frequent references in the past several years to a Gastown-Chinatown link are evidence of the development of a conceptual relationship between the two areas.

The second major trend in recent years has been the spectacular growth of those sectors of the Chinatown economy catering to newer immigrants. Obvious redevelopment in retail food stores and specialty restaurants catering to immigrant customers has taken place on Pender Street east of Main Street. New development has spilled over on to Main Street both north and south of Hastings and on to Hastings Street itself. Two newly constructed theatres, showing solely Chinese films, and the addition on Main and Hastings of several specialty food importers reflects the obvious strength of the demand in this sector of the economy.

The new Chinese immigrants, do not relate to Chinatown as a

total insulated community. For the most part, because of the scarcity of suitable family housing in the Chinatown area, they do not live there. Neither, as has been pointed out previously, do they generally participate in the structure of the ethnic enclave. To them Chinatown represents the economic and downtown focal point of the City, much like Granville Street with its theatres and major department stores does to other Vancouverites.

Chinatown as a tourist market, has become a national and even North American attraction. In this sense it is clear that it is one of the regions most important sub-centres. In serving Chinese consumers, on a regional basis, physical expansion and development is rapidly changing to serve a growing and dispersed immigrant market. Of the three major groups generally associated with Chinatown - residents, tourists and immigrant consumers - the first group has become the least important. Planners concerned with "community" will first have to put emphasis on a definition of that term if their efforts and solutions are to reflect present reality.

C. Historical Preservation and Beautification.

In the past ten years there have been only two basic thrusts of public planning policy in the Chinatown area - historical preservation and transportation. These policy approaches in the Chinatown area have been and still are in conflict. To date no suitable compromise has been reached.

Chinatown is recognized, along with Gastown, as one of the major historical areas of the City. It is seen to be of significant size

and quality to be worthy of efforts to retain and refurbish its salient characteristics. The task of translating mere recognition of the value of Chinatown's physical uniqueness into action is the responsibility of the Beautification Section of Vancouver's Planning Department.

There have been over the past several years two or three attempts at City initiated beautification and upgrading. These have failed for a number of reasons - the two most important being an inability of the Chinatown Community to define itself, and policy conflict between beautification plans and transportation needs.

Pan-Community structures struggling to react to beautification initiatives, have been difficult to deal with because of their lack of organization and structure that is truly accountable. Citizen Committees elected to represent Chinatown, are out of necessity (to represent all competing interests as well as honouring certain outstanding leaders and individuals), large and unwieldy. Just as their very make-up is fraught with community political implications so is their ability to choose between various planning and policy alternatives hampered by various factions that compete within the committee structure. Unlike most conventional communities, where a committee might be struck out of a public meeting, the persons on a Chinatown Committee are not so much unknown quantities to each other as they are well known and established interests - interests that may be or have been in conflict or alliance over numerous issues going back as far as the overthrow of the Ch'ing dynasty in China (1912). In the context of Chinatown, a planner, when working cooperatively with a local Citizen Committee is not only working

with modern complex urban issues - he is also working with issues unresolved before his intrusion and that will remain unresolved as long as there are persons of one faction or the other within the community to remember them.

The most enduring of the beautification concepts for the Chinatown area, involves the development of an actively node around Pender and Carrall Streets. This involves the expansion of Chinatown back to the West (possibly attracted by False Creek Redevelopment and Gastown) a move which would reverse the eighty year trend of growth to the east. A Chinatown-Gastown and False Creek pedestrian link are foundations of this plan.

The proposal for a Chinese Cultural Centre and housing development in the Pender-Keefer Division area is one of the first major steps under way to further this concept. Several years ago, a Chinese Pogoda was proposed as the node of this conceptional activity pattern; however, nothing came of it; and it still remains to be seen how far and how serious support for the Cultural Centre will actually be. While the Centre is seen by some as a focal point for bringing the community together in a social and cultural sense, as well as providing the major interface between the Chinese and other residents of Vancouver, others perceive the cultural centre movement to be dominated by leftists and fear that control (implying censorship and propaganda) will fall to new activists who will give and receive moral and political support from the People's Republic of China.

D. Traffic and Transportation.

The City Engineer has described the Chinatown area in the following terms:

"The neck of the downtown peninsula is the most important traffic corridor into the downtown. Hastings, Pender, Cordova, and Water Streets carry more traffic in and out of the downtown peninsula than do any of the bridges..."¹⁴¹

At peak period the neck is operating virtually at total capacity. The basic conflict between pedestrianization (almost always explicit in beautification plans) and the necessity of moving volumes of commuter and commercial traffic through the neck of the peninsula is readily apparent. At the present time 297 buses move in both directions at peak hours through the neck. This service is hampered by excessive vehicular congestion resulting from the fact that the grade street system is already at its effective limit. Modal shifts (to public transit) are required; however, a fast and efficient bus rapid transit system demands exclusive bus lanes for which there is at present no capacity.

From the City's point of view, while the beautification of Chinatown is an important goal, in practice pressures for the constant expansion of the grade street capacity on that neck of land (through Chinatown) to and from the C.B.D. have had much more immediate impact than conceptual plans for a "future Chinatown". Traffic planning within the constraints of a grade street system has been incremental. Each small step (most more easily endorsed by City Council and community,

¹⁴¹ City Engineer, Report to City Council, June, 1974.

than grand plans for preservation and beautification) restricts and limits future plans for the area.

The Quebec-Columbia connector running parallel to Main Street and designed to ease the traffic load from Kingsway and Broadway into the CBD presents major problems for the whole pedestrian link concept with Gastown and False Creek.

Recent downtown proposals call for a transit mall on Hastings. The result of this will be to force the remaining commuter traffic on to Pender and through to the C.B.D. Most will probably funnel through the Pender-Keefer Division defining the limit of Chinatown's Western expansion, with a major traffic artery.

Vancouver does not at present have definite plans for a transportation network. The City is committed to rail rapid transit, but; the planning and implementation of such a system is in the hands of the Provincial Government. The lack of an overall identifiable transportation plan for the City, especially the core area, has resulted in "ad hoc solutions", the effect of which have become cumulative over time.

It is clear that the Chinatown-Gastown-False Creek axis will be one of the most critical components of a downtown eastside plan. Of the three areas, Chinatown is at present the least certain of its future direction, and the most threatened by transportation demands.

E. Low Rental Housing.

Chinatown is part of a greater area generally known as the Downtown Eastside. In reality the term Downtown Eastside has developed an euphemism for Skid Row. In this context Chinatown is part of the low rent housing district of the City; and with the exception of the Strathcona sub-area, almost all housing in the area is of the hotel and rooming house variety.

The City's housing policy over the past three years in the Downtown Eastside has had a three pronged thrust: rehabilitation; code enforcement; and the provision of new units.

Active publicly sponsored rehabilitation has taken place only in Strathcona; in that sub-area bounded by Hastings, Gore, Prior and Campbell Streets. Here, in what is the last real stand of single-family dwellings on the fringe of the downtown area, the three levels of government experimented successfully with a program that was the forerunner of the Federal Government's Neighbourhood Improvement Program. The Strathcona program, implemented as an alternative to total clearance and urban renewal, has ensured, for at least another decade, the security of many of the families who own houses or rent apartments immediately adjacent to Chinatown. There are roughly 1200 units of housing in the rehabilitation area of which approximately a quarter are single family dwellings occupied by long standing resident families. The remaining apartments or conversions cater for the most part to elderly singles. New immigrant families are generally unable to find accommodation in the Chinatown area, and are forced, because of a low supply of suitable family units in the area, to seek housing elsewhere. The Strathcona

rehabilitation movement among citizens was led by three major families; the Chans, the Cons and the Lees; all of whom are long standing residents of the area. In this sense, rehabilitation did little to open or enlarge a pool of low income housing for newcomers; rather, it preserved for a time an established community dominated by "relatively" long standing residents in Canada. It is clear that given the traditional orientation of these first immigrant families and oppositely the almost complete acculturation of their children brought up in Canada that many of this group are not so much a part of the changing Chinatown as are the new Hong Kong consumers and business interests.

More important than the rehabilitation of Strathcona housing units will be the impact of the City's recent initiatives in housing code enforcement. While the majority of Chinese consumers in Greater Vancouver do not live in Chinatown, those that do (with the exception of established owner-occupier families in Strathcona) live in hotel and rooming housing accommodations. These are the single and elderly - the residue of the first waves of immigration. Their problems have been discussed earlier in this thesis; however, these problems are being compounded by drastic housing policies.

Vancouver, because of a heavy commitment on the part of newly elected "reform" politicians, rushed headlong into a new style of aggressive housing code enforcement without proper thought or study. These policies involving a new Fire By-law, and a new Health By-law (Lodging House By-law), both of which require expensive capital outlays on the part of building owners and operators have hurt rather than aided most of Chinatown's elderly residents.

"Code enforcement is a highly volatile mechanism when used in the inner city....In its present form, code enforcement when pursued aggressively and mechanically can harm the residents economically and socially and can have detrimental effects on the low rent housing stock."¹⁴²

Where ready cash is not available, mortgages are generally required. Mortgage companies are hesitant to lend on the older, riskier buildings of Chinatown, and consequently interest rates are high, and amortization periods are short. Rent increases of a magnitude to service new debt are presently denied by Provincial regulation.

The most common social problems evident in other North American cities during periods of strict code enforcement have been; dislocation and eviction of tenants; rent increases for low income tenants; and depletion of lowest income housing stock.¹⁴³

Surveys done by the City in September 1974 show a loss of 865 low income units in the Downtown Eastside from January 1, 1974 to September 10, 1974.¹⁴⁴ The impact of these policies on Chinese has been staggering. An examination of the 39 tenants being evicted from the East Hotel shows that 38 were Chinese and had an average age of 71.5 years. None of them as of October, 1974, had found alternative places to live.

¹⁴² Hartman, Kessler and LeGates, "Municipal Housing Code Enforcement and Low Income Tenants", A.I.P. Journal, March, 1974, p. 91.

¹⁴³ Ibid. pp. 93-94.

¹⁴⁴ City of Vancouver, Social Planning Department, Report to City Council, September, 1974.

City officials expect the situation to worsen, as further closures reduce the vacancy rate below zero, rooming houses convert to daily tenancies to frustrate rent control regulations, and elderly tenants, if fortunate enough to find a place to live, pay rents 30% to 50% higher.

In another sector of public involvement in the housing market, the City's efforts at providing new public housing have been only moderately successful. While several hundred units are presently (1975) in the planning stages only 56 have been completed. Experience has shown that at a conservative estimate, two or more years is required for the three levels of Government to move from concept to actual provision of units. No real relief can be seen for several years.

The depletion of the lowest income housing stock in and around the Chinatown area has highlighted another split in the Chinatown community, that between the poorer tenants and the relatively wealthy Chinese landlords who tend to live outside the Chinatown area. Again, modern economic and generally universal social pressures are over-riding traditional links and attitudes.

Conclusion.

Trends indicate that there will be an increasing decline in the influence and stability of the traditional social structure; this will be matched by functional changes in land use oriented towards consumers who are foreign or only marginally connected with the established Chinatown social and cultural pattern. Chinatown and its immediate environs will continue to support a residential community dependent upon the social and cultural amenity offered, but this group will continue to decline in proportion to the overall growth of the Vancouver Chinese community. Blocked to the east by the down zoning of the Strathcona area and its maintenance (for at least 10 years) as a residential district, and limited in the core area by the constraints of historical preservation legislation, Chinatown can only expand more visibly along Main Street and Hastings Street. Already developed parts of Chinatown, particularly where buildings are old or not intensively used, may be redeveloped or have their use changed (subject to historical zoning regulations). This expansion will be oriented to the Hong Kong immigrant while the more intensively used core will absorb, probably through the gradual loss of social and traditional uses, the growth in tourist oriented commerce.

It is clear that present trends also show an increasing visibility of social problems in the area, particularly those associated with the elderly, the juvenile delinquent and the unskilled immigrant. Among emerging leaders, concern for the loss of cultural identity, competition over the direction of cultural identity, aggressiveness both with regard to their newly found, but tenuous status, within the community and with regard to local issues affecting the area; as well

as continued traditional distrust of civil officials will be prominent. The intrusion of new Hong Kong money will probably grow into a significant issue and one that will have a major influence on the changing physical structure and economic orientation of the area.

Chinatown has reached a critical period of change that will last for several years within which the broad future of the area will be molded. Many of the major influences in the shaping of the future have already been laid, and are beyond the control of the community and of municipal planners; however, much remains open and will become open. To what extent Chinatown's future may be shaped by co-operation between the community and city planners depends on an understanding of the process of change and on an ability to actively seek to control and modify change to meet mutual goals. Whether mutual goals - or any goals - can be agreed upon is a major question.

It is also the question which begins the planning process. We can only begin.

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